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# FOLK LORE.

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"WAG AT THE WA"

NOTES ON THE

# FOLK LORE

OF THE

# NORTHERN COUNTIES OF ENGLAND AND THE BORDERS.

BY

WILLIAM HENDERSON.

*WITH AN APPENDIX ON HOUSEHOLD STORIES*

BY

S. BARING-GOULD, M.A.

AUTHOR OF 'ICELAND, ITS SCENES AND SAGAS,' 'POST-MEDIEVAL PREACHERS,' ETC.

'Our mothers' maids in our childhood . . . . have so frayed us with bullbeggars, spirits, witches, urchins, elves, hags, fairies, satyrs, pans, faunes, sylvans, kit-with-the-candlestick (will-o'-the-wisp), tritons (kelpies), centaurs, dwarfs, giants, imps, calcars (assy-pods), conjurors, nymphs, changelings, incubus, Robin-Goodfellow (Brownies), the spoorey, the man in the oak, the hellwain, the firedrake (dead light), the Puckle, Tom Thumb, Hobgoblin, Tom Tumbler, Bouclus, and such other bugbears, that we are afraid of our own shadows.'

REGINALD SCOTT.

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1866.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

# EARL VANE,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MUCH KINDNESS

AND OF MANY PLEASANT HOURS SPENT TOGETHER,

THIS VOLUME IS, BY PERMISSION, INSCRIBED

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF RESPECT AND ESTEEM

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S ATTACHED FRIEND,

WILLIAM HENDERSON.

# PREFACE.

THE AGE in which we live is remarkable, as in other points of view, so in this, that old habits and customs, old laws and sayings, old beliefs and superstitions, which have held their ground in the universal mind from the remotest antiquity, are fast fading away and perishing. We of the nineteenth century may congratulate ourselves on their disappearance; we may lament it, but the fact remains the same; and I for one will frankly acknowledge that I regret much which we are losing, that I would not have these vestiges of the past altogether effaced. It were pity that they should utterly pass away, and leave no trace behind. My heart as well as my imagination is too closely bound up with the sayings and doings which gave zest to the life of my forefathers, and so I became a Folk-Lore student before Folk Lore came into vogue as a pursuit. And, as befitted a genuine North-countryman, my researches were chiefly made in the district between the Tweed and the Humber. Accordingly, when, on the 14th of May, 1861, I was called upon as President of the Durham Athenæum to deliver a lecture in my native city, I chose for my subject the Folk Lore of

that part of England, and through the kindness of a few friends, residents in the North, if not natives of it, who zealously aided my researches, I was enabled to lay before the members of the Athenæum a considerable collection of the stories, sayings, and superstitions of old Northumbria.

It was plain that the mine was one of great riches, and it was to some extent unworked. Strangely enough, the mention of North Country Folk Lore in 'Choice Notes, reprinted from Notes and Queries,' is exceedingly scanty and meagre; and though Brand's Popular Antiquities contains a fairer proportion of matter from this district, and there is a good deal that is interesting in Richardson's Local Historian's Table Book, much more clearly remained to be gathered up. But there was no time to lose. Old traditions were no longer firmly rooted in the popular mind, old customs were fast dying out, old sayings and household tales lingering only on the lips of grandsires and grandames; they had ceased to be the spontaneous expression of the thoughts and feelings of the mass of our peasantry. And this, I believe, from two causes: first, the more generally diffused education of the people, and the fresh subjects of thought supplied to them in consequence; and again the migration of families which has taken place since the working of collieries and the extension of railways. Formerly, as our parish registers would show, families lived on for centuries in the same village or small town, sending out offshoots, far or near, as circumstances might lead. Now whole families

uproot themselves, and move into other districts; and it has been found that when people are wrenched away from local associations, though they may carry their traditions with them, they fail to transmit them to their descendants.

Be this however as it may, I continued my researches, noting down carefully every morsel of Folk Lore that came before me, and my reward has been far beyond my expectations. Besides many histories and sayings more or less noteworthy, I lighted on a treasure of exceeding value, which, through the kindness of my friend the Rev. R. O. Bromfield of Sprouston, I have been enabled to make my own. It was in fact a collection of Border customs, legends, and superstitions, put together, about fifty years ago, by a young medical student of the name of Wilkie, residing at Bowden, near Eildon Hall; and this at the desire of Sir Walter Scott, for the purpose of being used by him in a projected work on the subject, which he never carried beyond two short essays on the Border Minstrelsy. Mr. Wilkie appears to have been a favourite and protégé of Sir Walter Scott, who procured him an appointment in India, where the young man died. The collection, although of great interest, was, as I received it, by no means in a fit state for publication. The contents were not arranged, there was a good deal of repetition, and the style was diffuse and wordy.

Meanwhile I had shown my lecture to the accomplished Editor of the 'Monthly Packet,' whose interest in this and kindred subjects is well known, and whose

varied and extensive reading renders her opinion peculiarly valuable. She expressed a wish that the lecture should be turned into an article for that magazine. This was done, and that article is the nucleus of this volume. To it I have annexed the numerous contributions which during upwards of five years I have received from a wide circle of friends, and with it I have incorporated the Wilkie MS., illustrating the whole, so far as I was able, by the Folk Lore of other parts of the country, and in a measure of all Europe. But for the kindness of many valuable friends who have noted down whatever bore upon the subject, and communicated to me the result of their observations, the collection could never have been formed; and I desire to express my hearty thanks to all who have thus aided me in my task, especially to the Rev. J. C. Atkinson, Perpetual Curate of Danby; the Rev. J. Barnby, Principal of Hatfield Hall, University of Durham; the Rev. J. F. Bigge, Vicar of Stamfordham; the Rev. R. O. Bromfield, Sprouston; the Rev. J. Cundill, Incumbent of St. Margaret's, Durham; the Rev. W. Greenwell, Rector of St. Mary in the South Bailey, Durham; the Rev. J. W. Hick, Incumbent of Byer's Green; the Rev. Canon Humble, St. Ninian's, Perth; the Rev. George Ornsby, Vicar of Fishlake; the Rev. James Raine, York, Secretary of the Surtees Society; the Rev. H. B. Tristram, Master of Greatham Hospital; the Rev. R. Webster Vicar of Kelloe; the Author of 'The Heir of Redclyffe;' Mr. J. R. Appleton, Durham; Mr. Henry Denny, Assistant Curator of the Museum

of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society; Mr. H. Heaviside, Stockton-on-Tees; Mr. James Hardy, Old Cambus; Mr. John Holland, Sheffield; the late F. H. Johnson, M.D., Sunderland; Mr. T. P. Teale, F.R.S., Leeds; Mr. J. M. Tweddell, Stokesley; Mr. F. J. Wharam, Durham; Mr. C. Waistall, Cotherstone; and Mr. W. Wilcox, Whitburn.

To my friend the Rev. George Ornsby I am under still further obligations for much valuable general assistance in my undertaking, and to the Rev. S. Baring-Gould for many notes of exceeding interest, for much of the Introductory Chapter, including all the references to the Fathers, &c., and for the Appendix on Household Stories. The Notes are dispersed throughout the work, and are distinguished by his initials. I must further add, that I have not pursued my labours singlehanded, although it is the wish of my fellow-worker, who desires only to be designated by the initials S. W., that this volume comes out under my name alone. I cannot, however, in justice do less than state here that her share in the work has been fully equal to my own.

In comparing and classifying the subject-matter of this volume, I have chiefly used the following books: Brand's Popular Antiquities,—Choice Notes from Notes and Queries: Folk Lore,—Kelly's Indo-European Traditions,—Thorpe's Mythology and Popular Traditions of Scandinavia,—and Richardson's Local Historian's Table Book.

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# INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

IT IS DIFFICULT, while living on the surface of society, so smooth, so rational, so commonplace, to realise what relics of a widely different past linger in its depths—relics of an extensive and deeply-rooted system of mythology, antedating in great measure Christianity itself. Yet so it is: in almost every part of our island we occasionally come across such bits of stubborn antiquity, but in the North of England they abound. The district between the Tweed and the Humber teems with Folk Lore of a rich and varied character. Great part of the county of Durham is indeed spoiled (in an antiquarian point of view) by collieries; but it still contains some quiet villages far away from great thoroughfares, where strange tales are yet told and strange old customs practised; while the north and west of Northumberland, and the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, abound with them.

Those who mix much among the lower orders, and have opportunities of enquiring closely into their beliefs, customs, and usages, will find in these remote places, —nay, even in our towns and larger villages,—a vast mass of superstition, holding its ground most tenaciously.

On looking closely into this, we discern, among much that is mythical and legendary in its character, and much that is the simple outgrowth of human fancy and imagination, a good deal of what is unquestionably heathenism in disguise. Archbishop Whately states this perhaps too broadly. 'It is,' he says, 'a marvel to many, and seems to them nearly incredible, that the Israelites should have gone after other gods, and yet the vulgar in most parts of Christendom are actually serving the gods of their heathen ancestors. But then they do not call them gods, but fairies or bogles, and they do not apply the word worship to their veneration of them, nor sacrifice to their offerings. And this slight change of name keeps most people in ignorance of a fact that is before their eyes.'[1]

This is a strong statement, yet historical facts appear to bear it out. We know that as late as the seventeenth century undisguised idol-worship was to be found in Brittany, while down to the eighteenth it was common there for offerings of money, milk, and ears of corn to be made to the Great Menhir, an obelisk once connected with Druidical worship. We know too, that almost if not quite up to the present time, on holiday eves, the Norwegian peasant has offered cakes, sweet porridge, and libations of wort or buttermilk, on mounds consecrated to the invisible folk, and called bœttir mounds; and, as will be shown hereafter, well-nigh within the memory of man, beasts have been slain in sacrifice, at times of great extremity, in our own

[1] Miscellaneous Remains, p. 274.

country; while the rites still in use for the dressing of wells at Buxton and Tissington in Derbyshire, and in other places throughout England and on the Borders, bear a singular resemblance to the Fontinalia of heathen Rome, when the nymphs of wells and fountains were honoured by flinging nosegays into the fountains and crowning the wells with garlands of flowers.

The question naturally arises, how is it that heathen beliefs and heathen observances still exist in a country which was christianised so many centuries ago? We may reply, with reference to the district especially under our consideration, that the stern mould of the Northern mind is strong to retain images once deeply impressed upon it. And on the subject generally, it may be observed that from the beginning the Church appears practically to have tolerated such parts of the old mythological system as she considered harmless, and to have permitted them to live on without check or rebuke. Thus the customs of the Lupercalia passed into those of St. Valentine's Day, and the Scandinavian Yule coinciding with the Feast of the Nativity, the old Yule merrymakings and mummings continued in use without raising ecclesiastical censure. Thus the honour long given to persons and demigods was transferred to saints and martyrs. Thus, again, old sacred sites were taken possession of for the new faith. We often find Christian burial-grounds occupying the site of Pagan ones; and I myself have seen huge upright stones marking some place sacred in heathen eyes, in close

proximity to Christian churches.[1] In Sweden there was, at the first propagation of Christianity, a good deal of intermingling of truth and error. Heathen images were removed from the ancient oratories, and those of sacred beings set up in their places; still old associations proved sometimes too strong for the converts, and prayers to Thor and Freya were mixed with Christian orisons.

In judging the clergy of the day for their line of action in this and kindred matters, we should in justice remember that they were taken from among the people, and consequently imbued with the same prejudices, feelings, and superstitions as those to whom they ministered. Nor must we forget that, like them, they were wholly unacquainted with the causes of natural phenomena. This universal ignorance of the laws of nature goes far to account for the widespread superstition which for ages pervaded all Europe, and which from local causes has taken so firm a grasp of some particular spots.

Perfectly unacquainted with the laws that govern the universe, the early Christians, like the Pagans and Neo-Platonists, made supernatural beings the special cause of all the phenomena of nature. They attributed to these beings, according to their beneficial or injurious effects, all atmospheric phenomena. According to them, angels watched over the different elements, and demons endeavoured to overthrow their power. From

[1] Thus, in Ireland, St. Patrick and his followers almost invariably selected the sacred sites of Paganism, and built their wooden churches under the shadow of the Round Towers—then as mysterious and inscrutable as they are to-day.

the struggle between them arose storms and whirlwinds, plagues and earthquakes. St. Clement of Alexandria refers all this to diabolic agency, and the same idea was perpetuated throughout the Middle Ages.[1] Hence it was that of old, storms were conjured to depart by the sign of the cross or the ringing of church-bells.

From the first the Church, by the decrees of Councils and the voice of her chief Fathers and Doctors, condemned such superstition as she deemed worthy of notice; not however on the ground of folly, but of impiety. It is possible, therefore, that her denunciations might go towards confirming a belief in the whole fabric of superstition, as a real and powerful though forbidden thing. 'Religion,' said Lactantius, 'is the cultus of the truth, superstition is that of the false.' 'I omit other things that might make us weep,' says St. Chrysostom.[2] 'Your auguries, your omens, your superstitious observances, your casting of nativities, your signs, your amulets, your divinations, your incantations, your magical arts,—these are crying sins, enough to provoke the anger of God.' 'You may see a man washing himself from the pollution of a dead body; but from dead works, never. Again, spending much zeal in the pursuit of riches, and yet supposing the whole is undone by the crowing of a cock. So darkened are they in their understanding,—their soul is filled with all sorts of terrors. For instance: "Such a person," one will say, "was the first to meet me as I was

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, Summ. Theolog. I. quæst. lxxx. act 2. St. Bonaventura, Comp. Theolog. veritat ii. 26. Albertus Magnus de Potentia Dæmonium.

[2] Hom. X. on 1 Tim.

going out of doors to-day," and of course a thousand ills must ensue. At another time, "That wretch of a servant, in giving me my shoes, held out the left shoe first," terrible mishaps and mischief! "I myself in coming out put my left leg foremost," and here too is a token of misfortune. Then, as I go out, my right eye turns up from beneath—a sure sign of tears. Again, the women, when the reeds strike against the standards and ring, or when they themselves are scratched by the shuttle, turn this also into a sign. And again, when they strike the web with the shuttle, and do it with some vehemence, and then the reeds on the top sound, this again they make a sign; and ten thousand things beside as ridiculous. And so if an ass bray, or a cock crow, or a man sneeze, or whatever else happen, like men bound with ten thousand chains—they suspect everything, and are more enslaved than all the slaves in the world.'[1]

A long list of popular superstitions was condemned by a Council held in the eighth century at Leptines, in Hainault, under the title of *Indiculus superstitionum et paganarium*. Pope Gregory III. issued similar anathemas.[2] The *Capitularies* of Charlemagne and his successors repeat the denunciation of them.

About the same date similar superstitions were rebuked in Scotland by the Abbot Cumeanus the Wise, in his tract, *De mensura pœnitentiarum*. In the same century

[1] St. Chrysost. Hom. XII. on Eph. iv. 17. Compare also St. Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. 4, pp. 841–844. St. Cyril of Jerus., iv. 37; St. Augustine, Enchiridion, p. 134, de Doct. Christ. ii. 20, 21, &c.

[2] Concil. ed. Labbs, lib. vi. fol. 1476, 1482.

St. Eligius, Bishop of Noyon, preached against similar superstitions: 'Above all, I implore you not to observe the sacrilegious customs of the pagans. Do not consult the gravers of talismans, nor diviners, nor sorcerers, nor enchanters, for any sickness whatsoever... Do not take notice of auguries, or of sneezings; do not pay attention to the songs of the birds when you go abroad. Let no Christian pay regard to the particular day on which he leaves a house or enters it. Let no one perplex himself about the New Moon or eclipses. Let no one do on the calends of January those forbidden, ridiculous, ancient, and disreputable things, such as dancing, or keeping open house all night, or getting drunk. Let no one on the feast of St. John, or any other saint, celebrate solstices by dances, carols, or diabolical chants; let no one invoke Neptune, Pluto, Diana, Minerva, or his genius; let no one rest on the day of Jupiter, unless it fall on a saint's day; nor observe the month of May, nor any other season or day, except the Lord's day. Let no one light torches along the highways and cross-roads; let no one tie notes to the neck of a man or some animal; let no one make lustrations or enchantments upon herbs, or make his cattle pass through a split tree, or through a hole made in the ground. Let no one utter loud cries when the moon is pale; let no one fear that something will happen to him at New Moon; let no one believe in destiny or fortune, or the quadrature of the geniture, commonly called a nativity, &c. &c.'

Four centuries later, Burchard of Worms made a

collection of denunciations of superstition from the decrees of Councils and Popes, and the list is very remarkable. 'Superstition is a vice opposed by excess to adoration and religion,' said the illustrious Gerson; and in the provincial Council of York, in A.D. 1466, it was declared, with St. Thomas, that all superstition was idolatry.

On the whole, it certainly appears that the early and medieval churches in their collective form, far from consciously encouraging heathenish superstition, constantly protested against it. Individual clergy in remote districts may have taken a different line, as St. Patrick is said to have 'engrafted Christianity on Paganism with so much skill, that he won over the people to the Christian religion before they understood the exact difference between the two systems of belief.'[1] At any rate, the old superstition lived on with marvellous vitality, and the Reformation, at least on the Continent and in Scotland, did little to check it. On the contrary, it would seem that when cut away from communion with the angelic world and saints departed, men's minds fastened the more readily upon a supernatural system of another order. Curiously enough, Martin Luther fell a prey to the grossest superstition: witness the following extracts from his Table Talk, quoted in the Introduction to Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. :—

'Changelings (*Wechselbälge*) and Kielkropfs, Satan lays in the place of the genuine children, that people

[1] Dr. O'Donovan's Four Masters, p. 131.

may be tormented with them. He often carries off young maidens into the water, has intercourse with them, and keeps them with him until they have been delivered; then lays such children in cradles, takes the genuine children out, and carries them away. But such changelings, it is said, do not live more than eighteen or twenty years.' Again: 'Eight years ago there was a changeling in Dessau, which I, Dr. Martin Luther, have both seen and touched: it was twelve years old, and had all its senses, so that people thought it was a proper child; but that mattered little, for it only ate, and that as much as any four ploughmen or thrashers, and when any one touched it, it screamed; when things in the house went wrong, so that any damage took place, it laughed and was merry; but if things went well, it cried. Thereupon I said to the Prince of Anhalt, "If I were prince or ruler here, I would have this child thrown into the water, into the Moldau, that flows by Dessau, and would run the risk of being a homicide." But the Elector of Saxony, who was then at Dessau, and the Prince of Anhalt, would not follow my advice. I then said they ought to cause a pater-noster to be said in the church, that God would take the devil away from them. This was done daily at Dessau, and the said changeling died two years after.'

And on one point at least the early Scotch and English Calvinistic divines evinced the greatest credulity. It is notorious that they believed unhesitatingly in the existence of sorcery, and were ever ready to extend and enforce the legal penalties against it. 'It is not to be

denied,' says Sir Walter Scott,[1] 'that the Presbyterian ecclesiastics, who in Scotland were often appointed by the Privy Council commissioners for the trial of witchcraft, evinced a very extraordinary degree of credulity in such cases, and that the temporary superiority of the same sect in England was marked by enormous cruelties of this kind.'

The notices, however, of the Folk Lore of my fellow-countrymen which I have been able to collect during the last six years, are widely varied in their origin. If some of them are unmistakable relics of heathenism, some have their origin in the rites and customs of the unreformed Church, and some in the myths and historical traditions of our ancestors the Saxons and Danes; while others, again, appear to be the spontaneous growth of sensitive and imaginative minds, yearning for communion with a mysterious past and yet more mysterious future. They are varied too in their character; some breathing deep religious feeling, some full of light graceful fancy, while some are gross, vulgar, even cruel superstitions. Let me add, that while recording them a conviction has deepened upon me that there are very, very many more incidents of a similar kind to be collected. Unless this be speedily done, I firmly believe that many a singular usage and tradition will pass away from the land unnoted and unremembered. It would be very desirable if a scheme could be organised for

[1] Demonology and Witchcraft, Letter viii.

systematically collecting and classifying the remnants of our Folk Lore; but at least I would intreat all those in whose eyes the subject possesses any interest, accurately to note down every old custom, observance, proverb, saying, or legend, which comes before them.

# NOTES
ON
# FOLK LORE.

## CHAPTER I.

### LIFE AND DEATH OF MAN.

Day of birth—Hour of birth—Border customs at the birth of a child—Unchristened ground—Unbaptized children at the mercy of fairies, &c.—Folk lore connected with baptism—The toom cradle—The child's first visit—Cutting of nails—'Weeds and onfas'—The caul and veil—Folk lore of childhood: of boyhood—Schoolboy superstitions—Cobbing match—Confirmation—Marriage portents—Marriage customs: On the borders in Yorkshire—Throwing the shoe—Kissing the bride—Hot pots—Rubbing with pease-straw—Race for a ribbon—Portents of death—Whistling woman and crowing hen—Border presages—The wraith or waff—St. Mark's Eve—Cauff-riddling—Saining a corpse—Death with the tide—Discovery of the drowned—Carrying the dead with the sun.

THROUGHOUT the Borders, and in the six northern counties of England, peculiar rites and customs are bound up with every stage of human life. To begin at the beginning—the nursery has there a folk lore of its own. And, first, the future character and fortunes of the infant may be divined from the day of the week on which it is born. For, as the old rhyme runs—

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
And Thursday's child has far to go.

Friday's child is loving and giving,
And Saturday's child works hard for its living;
But the child that is born on the Sabbath-day,
Is blithe and bonny, good and gay.

It is remarkable that these verses, which are still current in Stockton and its neighbourhood, should be found also in the West of England. Mrs. Bray records them in her 'Traditions of Devonshire' (vol. ii. p. 287), substituting 'Christmas Day' for 'the Sabbath Day,' and 'fair and wise' for 'blithe and bonny,' and says that they are in common use at Tavistock. 'Sunday children' are in Yorkshire deemed secure from the malice of evil spirits. In Germany, too, they are held to be privileged beings, but I am not aware that their immunities are so clearly defined.

'Sunday children' in Denmark have prerogatives by no means to be coveted. Witness the following narration from 'Thorpe's Mythology,' vol. ii. p. 203: 'In Fyen there was a woman who was born on a Sunday, and, like other Sunday's children, had the faculty of seeing much that was hidden from others. But, because of this property, she could not pass by the church at night without seeing a hearse or a spectre, the gift became a perfect burden to her. She therefore sought the advice of a man skilled in such matters, who directed her, whenever she saw a spectre, to say, "Go to Heaven;" but when she met a hearse, "Hang on." Happening some time after to meet a hearse, she, through lapse of memory, cried out, "Go to Heaven," and straightway the hearse rose in the air, and vanished. Afterwards, meeting a spectre, she said to it, "Hang on," when the spectre clung round her neck, hung on her back, and drove her down into the earth before it. For three days her shrieks were heard before the spectre would put an end to her wretched life.'

The hour of birth is also important, for children born during the hour after midnight have the power through life of seeing the spirits of the departed. Mrs. L——, a Yorkshire lady, informs me that she was very near being thus distinguished, but the clock had not struck 12 when she was born. When a child, she mentioned this circumstance to an old servant, adding that mamma was sure her birthday was the 23rd, not the 24th, for she had enquired at the time. 'Ay, ay,' said the old woman, turning to the child's nurse, 'mistress would be very anxious about *that*, for bairns born after midnight see more things than other folk.'

The Wilkie MS. tells us that throughout the Borderland, the birth of an infant is the signal for plenty of eating and drinking. Tea, duly qualified with brandy or whisky, and a profusion of shortbread and buns, are provided for all visitors, and it is very unlucky to allow anyone to leave the house without his share of these good things. But most important of all is the 'shooten' or groaning cheese, from which the happy father must cut a 'whang-o'luck' for the lassies of the company, taking care not to cut his own finger while so doing, since in that case the child would die before reaching manhood. The whang must be taken from the edge of the cheese, and divided into portions, one for each maiden. Should there be any to spare, they may be distributed among the spinster friends of the family, but if the number should fall short, the mistake cannot be rectified; there is no virtue in a second slice. The girls put these bits of cheese under their pillows, and ascribe to them the virtues of bridecake similarly treated.

Now it is plain that cake and a new cheese were formerly provided against the birth of a child both in England and Scotland, and the custom still extends as

far south as the Humber. In the North of England, as soon as the happy event is over, the doctor cuts both cake and cheese, and all present partake of both, on pain of the poor baby growing up without personal charms. The cake which is in use on these occasions in Yorkshire is called pepper-cake, and somewhat resembles thick gingerbread. It is eaten with cheese and rich caudle, and all visitors to the house up to the baptism are invited to partake of it.[1] In Sweden, the cake and cheese are got ready in good time; they are placed beside the bride in the bridal bed, in preparation for her first confinement.[2] In Oxfordshire, the cake used to be cut first in the middle and gradually shaped to a ring, through which the child was passed on its christening-day. The Durham nurse reserves some cake and cheese, and when the infant is taken out to its christening, she bestows them on the first person whom she meets of opposite sex to that of the child. A similar custom has I know but just died out in the Devonshire villages round Dartmoor, and in 'Choice Notes, Folk Lore,' we read of such a gift of bread and cheese in Somersetshire, and of a cake in Cornwall. (Page 147).

It is thought unlucky on the Borders to tread on the graves of unbaptised children, or 'unchristened ground,' as they term it. The Wilkie MS. informs us of the special risk that is run. He who steps on the grave of a stillborn or unbaptised child, or of one who has been overlaid by its nurse, subjects himself to the fatal disease of the grave-merels, or grave-scab. This complaint comes on with trembling of the limbs and hard breathing, and at last the skin burns as if touched with

[1] Brand's Pop. Ant. ed. 1854, vol. ii. p. 71.
[2] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 109.

hot iron. The following old verses elucidate this superstition :—

Love to the babie that ne'er saw the sun,
All alane and alane, oh!
His bodie shall lie in the kirk 'neath the rain,
All alane and alane, oh!

His grave must be dug at the foot o' the wall,
All alane and alane, oh!
And the foot that treadeth his body upon,
Shall have scab that will eat to the bane, oh!

And it ne'er will be cured by doctor on earth,
Tho' every one should tent him, oh!
He shall tremble and die like the elf-shot eye,
And return from whence he came, oh!

Powerless, however, as the faculty may be, there is a remedy for the grave-merels, though not of easy attainment. It lies in the wearing a sack, thus prepared. The lint must be grown in a field which shall be manured from a farmyard keep that has not been disturbed for forty years. It must be spun by old Habbitrot, that queen of spinsters, of whom more hereafter; it must be bleached by an honest bleacher, in an honest miller's milldam, and sewed by an honest tailor. On donning this mysterious vestment, the sufferer will at once regain his health and strength.[1]

It is curious to observe what a different feeling, with regard to stillborn children, may be met with in the South. We read in 'Choice Notes' (p. 172) that one of the Commissioners of Devonport, after complaining of the charge made upon the parish for the interment of

[1] In Sweden, if a person afflicted with an open sore walks over any graves, it will heal slowly or never. (Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 110.) An old belief in Yorkshire enjoins that a new-born child be laid in the arms of a maiden before anyone else holds him.

such children, said: 'When I was a young man, it was thought lucky to have a stillborn child put into any open grave, as it was considered a sure passport to heaven for the next person buried there.'

In the southern counties of Scotland, children are considered before baptism at the mercy of the fairies, who may carry them off at pleasure, or inflict injury upon them. Brand mentions this danger,[1] and says the Danish women guard their children during this period against evil spirits by placing in the cradle, or over the door, garlic, salt, bread, and steel in the form of some sharp instrument. 'Something like this,' he adds, 'obtained in England. In Germany, the proper things to lay in the cradle are "orant" (which is translated into either horehound or snapdragon), blue marjoram, black cumin, a right shirt-sleeve, and a left stocking. The "Nickert" cannot then harm the child.' The modern Greeks dread witchcraft at this period of their children's lives, and are careful not to leave them alone during their first eight days, within which period the Greek Church refuses to baptise them.[2]

In Scotland the little one's safeguard is held to lie in the juxtaposition of some article of dress belonging to its father. This was experienced by the wife of a shepherd near Selkirk. Soon after the birth of her first child, a fine boy, she was lying in bed with her baby by her side, when suddenly she became aware of a confused noise of talking and merry laughter in the 'spence,' or room. This, in fact, proceeded from the fairies, who were forming a child of wax as a substitute for the baby, which they were planning to steal away. The poor mother suspected as much, so in great alarm she seized her husband's waistcoat, which chanced to be

[1] Pop. Ant. vol. ii. p. 73.

[2] Wright's Literature of the Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 291.

lying at the foot of the bed, and flung it over herself and the child. The fairies set up a loud scream, calling out 'Auld lucky has cheated us o' our bairnie!' . Soon afterwards the woman heard something fall down the lum (or chimney), and looking out she saw a waxen image of her baby, stuck full of pins, lying on the hearth. When her husband came home he made up a large fire and threw the fairy lump upon it; but instead of burning, the thing flew up the chimney, and the house instantly resounded with shouts of joy and peals of laughter. Family affection must have been very strong when any trifle closely connected with the father was deemed a safeguard for the child,[1] a safeguard needed till its baptism shielded it from every evil or malicious sprite.

Our northern folk lore is unanimous in bearing witness to the power of baptism. A clerical friend of mine, who once held a cure in Northumberland, tells me that it is there considered to affect a child physically, as well as spiritually—a notion which I think prevails more or less through the whole country. I have heard old people in many places say of sickly infants, 'Ah, there will be a change when he has been taken to church! Children never thrive till they have been christened.' One of my clerical friends tells me that about five years ago an instance came under his notice of the healing power supposed to be wrought by baptism as regards the body. The infant child of a chimney-sweeper at Thorne, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was in a very weak state of health, and appeared to be pining away. A neighbour looked in, and enquired if

[1] 'A part of the father's clothes should be laid over a female child, and the mother's petticoat on a male child, to find favour with the opposite sex.'—Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 109.

the child had been baptised. On an answer being given in the negative, she gravely said, 'I would try having it christened.' The counsel was taken, and I believe with success. It is the custom in Northumberland to make the chrisom child sleep the first night in the cap he wore at baptism. 'Loud murmurs,' says my friend, 'arose against me, early in my ministerial life, for applying so much water that the cap had to be taken off and dried, whereas it should be left on till the next morning. I threw the blame on the modern caps with their expanse of frilling, on which the good woman said that I was quite right; she had an old christening cap, the heirloom of a friend, which she could show me, of a very different make. Accordingly I examined the cap, which was evidently very old, and made with reference to affusion in baptism. It excluded forehead, ears, and chin, and apparently never had strings. I said that if a mother would bring her baby in such a cap, I would undertake not to wet it.'

In the North as in the South of England, nurses think it lucky for the child to cry at its baptism; they say that otherwise the baby shows that it is too good to live. Some, however, declare that this cry betokens the pangs of the new birth; some that it is the voice of the evil spirit, as he is driven out by the baptismal water. As to the mother's churching, it is very 'uncannie' for her to enter any other house before she goes to church, and she carries ill-luck with her. It is believed also that if she appears out-of-doors under these circumstances, and receives any insult or blows from her neighbours, she has no remedy at law. I am informed that old custom enjoins Irish women to stay at home till after their churching, as rigidly as their Scotch or English sisters. They have, however, their own way of evading

it. They will pull a little thatch from their roof, or take a splinter of slate or tile off it, fasten this at the top of their bonnet, and go where they please, stoutly averring afterwards to the priest, or anyone else, that they have not gone from under their own roof.

A pleasant little custom is mentioned in the Wilkie MS.; the first child baptised by a minister, after his appointment to a parish, is to receive his Christian name. Through the North of England, if a boy and girl are brought together to the font, care must be taken that the former be christened first; else he is condemned to bear through life a smooth and beardless face, and, still worse, the young lady will surely be endowed with the ornament he lacks. This belief holds its ground in Durham, and extends as far north as the Orkney Islands.

One curious nursery practice exists both in the North and in the extreme West of England, that of leaving an infant's right hand unwashed; and the reason alleged is the same—that he may gather riches. The baby's nails must not be cut till he is a year old, for fear he should grow up a thief, or, as they quaintly express it in Cleveland, 'light-fingered.' The mother must bite them off, if need be; and in the west of Northumberland it is believed that if the first parings are buried under an ash-tree, the child will turn out 'a top singer.' The mention of the ash is curious, for has it not been from very ancient times a sacred tree, supplying in its sap the first nourishment to the Grecian hero, as now to the Celtic Highlander? Nay, according to Hesiod, Zeus made the third or brazen race of hard ashwood—pugnacious and terrible;[1] as Yggdrasil, the cloud-tree of the Norseman, out of which he believed the first man was made, was an ash.

[1] Grote's History of Greece, vol. i. chap. 2.

When the year of infancy is past, and baby's nails may safely be given up to the scissors, care must be taken not to cut them on a Sunday or Friday. Friday, of course, is an unlucky day, and as for Sunday the old rhyme says—

> Better a child had ne'er been born
> Than cut his nails on a Sunday morn!

Another variation of the verse runs thus—

> Friday hair, Sunday horn,
> Better that child had ne'er been born!

And yet another—

> Sunday shaven, Sunday shorn,
> Better hadst thou ne'er been born!

Or, at greater length—

> Cut them on Monday, cut them for health,
> Cut them on Tuesday, cut them for wealth;
> Cut them on Wednesday, cut them for news,
> Cut them on Thursday, a pair of new shoes;
> Cut them on Friday, cut them for sorrow,
> Cut them on Saturday, a present to-morrow;
> But he that on Sunday cuts his horn,
> Better that he had never been born!

Again, the Cleveland nurses say that it is very important for an infant to go up in the world before it goes down. Thus, if a child should be born in the top story of a house, for want of a flight of stairs, one of the gossips will take it in her arms, and mount a table, chair, or chest of drawers, before she carries it downstairs. I have heard of a similar belief in the Channel Islands.

The Wilkie MS. contains a caution against rocking a cradle when it is 'toom,' or empty, and cites on the subject the following fragment:—

THE TOOM CRADLE.

Oh! rock not the cradle when the babie 's not in,
For this by old women is counted a sin;
It 's a crime so inhuman it may na' be forgi'en,
And they that wi' do it ha'e lost sight of heaven.
Such rocking maun bring on the babie disease,
Well may it grow fretty that none can it please,
Its crimson lip pale grows, its clear eye wax dim,
Its beauty grow pale, and its visage wax grim.
Its heart flutters fast, it breathes hard, then is gone,
To the fair land of heaven * * * *

The belief thus expressed holds its ground in the southern counties of Scotland, particularly in Selkirkshire. It crops out too in Holland, where rocking an empty cradle is affirmed to be injurious to the infant, and a prognostic of its death;[1] and in Sweden, where they say that it makes the child noisy and given to crying.[2] Rocking the toom cradle is often deprecated in the counties of Durham and Yorkshire on another ground; it is said there to be ominous of another claimant for that place of rest. The proverb 'soon teeth, soon toes,' shows another portent of such an event. If baby's teeth come early there will soon be fresh toes, *i.e.* another baby. This belief extends to Sweden.

Perhaps I may mention here a kindly Northern custom, that in all sales, either under distraint for rent or common debt, the cradle should be left unsold, and remain the property of its original owner.[3] Are you

[1] Choice Notes, p. 6.

[2] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 110.

[3] In the year 1848, the family house of the Nevilles, in the city of Durham, called the Bull's Head, from their cognizance probably, was pulled down to make way for the present Town Hall. In a garret of the mansion was discovered a highly ornamented cradle, in which, doubtless, the great Barons of the North had been rocked in infancy. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by the workmen on the spot. There

curious to know the sex of the coming stranger? You must notice whether the old baby says papa or mamma first; in the former case it will be a boy, in the latter a girl. If a child tooths first in its upper jaw, it is considered ominous of death in infancy.

Much importance attaches to the baby's first visit to another house, on which occasion it is expected that he should receive three things—an egg, salt, and white bread or cake; the egg a sacred emblem from the remotest antiquity, and the cake and salt things used alike in Jewish and in pagan sacrifices. Somewhat grotesquely they add, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, a fourth thing, a few matches to light the child on the way to heaven. These votive offerings must be pinned in the baby's clothes, and so brought home. I have heard an old woman in Durham speak of this as the child receiving alms. 'He could not claim them before he was baptised,' she said; 'but now he is a christian he has a right to go and ask alms of his fellow-christians.'[1] Near Leeds this ceremony is called 'puddening.'

Scotch nurses note with which hand a child takes up a spoon to sup. If it be the left you may be sure that he will be an unlucky fellow all his life. So says the author of the Wilkie MS. He adds, that the women who live on the banks of the Ale and Teviot have a singular custom of wearing round their necks blue woollen threads or small cords, till they wean their children. They do this for the purpose of averting

is something touching in the thought, that the last relic in this city of a family so famed for deeds and for sufferings should be of so domestic a character. Probably the strong feeling alluded to in the text caused the cradle to be hidden when all the other furniture of this ancient house was dispersed.

[1] Compare this with the Swedish saying, 'You must not take an unbaptised child into anyone's house; it would bring misfortune there.'

ephemeral fevers, or, as they call them, 'weeds and onfas.' These threads are handed down from mother to daughter, and esteemed in proportion to their antiquity. 'I possess,' he says, 'one of these myself, which was given me by a woman in the farm of Caverse, near Melrose, and I remarked that all the nursing mothers in that district wore a similar thread.'

I do not know whether Superstition ever interferes with the grown-up maiden's peeps in the looking-glass. Perhaps it would be as well if she did, but in Durham she strictly forbids boy or girl to look in one while under a year old. Swedish maidens dare not look in the glass after dark, or by candlelight, lest they forfeit the goodwill of the other sex.[1] Several pieces of Swedish nursery folk lore are recorded in this place: *e.g.*, a book must be placed under the head of a new-born child, that he may be quick at reading; so long as an infant is unnamed the fire must not be extinguished; nor must anyone pass between the fire and a sucking babe; nor, again, must anyone entering the house take a child in his hands, without previously having touched fire. Also a child must not be allowed to creep through a window, nor may anyone step over a child, or walk round a child that is sitting on the floor, or is in a carriage; for then it is believed that the little one will never grow bigger than it is.

The Wilkie MS. tells us that children born with a hallihoo (holy or fortunate hood) or caul around their heads are deemed lucky, but the caul must be preserved carefully; for should it be lost or thrown away, the child will pine away, or even die. This superstition however is world-wide, and of such antiquity as to be reproved by St. Chrysostom, in several of his homilies.

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 108.

It still prevails in France, where its universality is attested by a proverbial expression: 'Etre né coiffé' means to be prosperous and fortunate in everythir In our own country, seamen used to purchase cauls to save them from drowning; advocates, that they might thereby be endued with eloquence. Twenty guineas were asked for one in 1779, twelve pounds in 181 six guineas in 1848. In this last case the caul was of some antiquity, and fifteen pounds had originally been given for it by a seaman, who had carried it about with him for thirty years.[1] Brand also quotes from Willis's 'Mount Tabor' (A.D. 1639), an account concerning 'an extraordinary veile that covered my body at my coming into the world,' which veil the author considered a sign of exceeding good fortune, 'there being,' he proudly adds, 'not one child amongst many hundreds that are so born.'

One other instance has however come to my own knowledge, and here, too, the happy mortal prided herself not a little on the distinction accorded to her. Within the last five years, in one of our northern cities, a servant was found by her mistress in a state of dejection, for which at first there seemed no assignable cause. After much questioning the lady elicited that her servant had been born with a veil over her head, which was now presaging evil to her. The veil, she said, had been carefully preserved by her mother, who had entrusted it to her on coming to woman's estate. It had been stretched and dried, and so had remained for many years. The girl kept it locked in her chest of drawers, and regularly consulted it as her oracle and adviser. If danger threatened her, the veil shrivelled up; if sickness, the veil became damp. When good

[1] Brand's Pop. Ant. vol. iii. p. 114.

fortune was at hand, the veil laid itself smoothly out; and if people at a distance were telling lies about her, the veil would rustle in its paper. Again, the veil did not like her to cut her hair. If she did so it changed colour and became uneasy. The owner firmly believed that when she died the veil would disappear. She regarded it with mysterious awe, and only allowed her most intimate friends to know of its existence.

Childhood has its own folk lore all England over—its traditional beliefs and practices, couched most commonly in verses which attune the infant ear, and charm the infant imagination. The young northern is peculiarly favoured in these respects. Does he want to make a butterfly alight, he has only to repeat the following lines—

Le, la, let,
Ma bonnie pet;

and if only he say them often enough, the charm never fails. Does rain threaten to spoil a holiday, let him chant out:—

Rain, rain, go away,
Come another summer's day;
Rain, rain, pour down,
And come no more to our town;

or, more quaintly yet—

Rain, rain, go to Spain;
Fair weather come again:

and, *sooner or later*, the rain will depart. If there be a rainbow the juvenile devotee must look at it all the time.

These rhymes are in use, I believe, in every nursery in England; but the following verse, though said to be popular in Berwickshire, is unknown elsewhere:—

Rainbow, rainbow, haud awa' hame,
A' yer bairns are dead but ane,
And it lies sick at yon grey stane,
And will be dead ere you win hame.
Gang owre the Drumaw and yon't the lea,
And down by the side o' yonder sea;
Your bairn lies greetin like to dee,
And the big teardrop is in his e'e.

The Drumaw is a high hill skirting the sea in the east of Berwickshire. It was a bold flight of fancy to personify the rainbow, and endow him with a family of bairns; and the contrast is curious between the young Celt searching by the grey stone for the rainbow's bairn, with 'the tear-drop in his ee,' and the Saxon boy running to catch the rainbow for the sake of the pot of gold at its foot.

The late Mr. Denham, a very careful collector of old sayings and old usages, says that he well remembers how he and his school-companions used, on the appearance of a rainbow, to place a couple of straws or twigs across on the ground, and, as they said, cross out the rainbow. The West Riding recipe for driving away a rainbow is, 'Make a cross of two sticks and lay four pebbles on it, one at each end.'

The crow-charm is perhaps universal in our island:—

Crow, crow, get out of my sight
Or else I'll eat your liver and light;

as well as the snail-charm—

Snail, snail, put out your horn,
Or I'll kill your father and mother the morn;

though the latter more commonly runs in the South—

Snail, snail, come out of your hole,
Or else I'll beat you as black as a coal.

In Devonshire they have it—

Snail, snail, shoot out your horn
Father and mother are dead,
Brother and sister are in the back-yard,
Begging for barley bread;

and in the South of Italy

Snail, snail, put out your horn,
Your mother is laughing you to scorn
For she has a little son just born.

The ladybird is roused to activity by the cry of—

Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home,
Thy house is on fire, thy children all gone!

And during the nursery application of dock-leaves for a nettle-sting, one of the following rhymes is sung:—

Nettle out, dock in,
Dock remove the nettle-sting;

Or,

In dock, out nettle,
Don't let the blood settle.

Or, again,

Nettle in, dock out,
Dock in, nettle out,
Nettle in, dock out,
Dock rub nettle out;

Or, lastly,

Docken in and nettle out,
Like an awde wife's dish-clout.

Schools, too, have their superstitions and their legendary rites. In my own day, and perhaps at the present time, no boy would commit himself to the Wear without the precaution of an eel-skin tied round his left leg to save him from cramp. Well do I remember thus fortifying myself against danger, before plunging into the stream. Another of our little superstitions was,

that a horsehair kept in water would in due time turn into an eel; and many a time have we tried the experiment, ever attributing its failure to some adventitious circumstance, not to a fallacy in our belief. I am told that this mistake may be traced to the sudden appearance, after rain, of long hairlike worms in the deep holes left in clayey ground by horses' hoofs. There was no trace of such creatures before the holes were filled with rain-water; and, wondering how they could have arrived there, boys imagined them to be hairs, dropped from the horses' mane and tail, in course of transition into eels.

We had at our school an institution called 'cobbing,' which tells of rougher times than ours. A friend and schoolfellow of mine thus describes it:—

'When a cobbing match was called, all the boys rushed forward, and seized the unfortunate object of the match by the hair, repeating these lines:

> All manner of men, under threescore and ten,
> Who don't come to this cobbing match,
> Shall be cobbed over and over again;
> By the high, by the low, by the wings of the crow,
> Salt-fish, regnum, buck, or a doe.

I spare you the details of the tortures named salt-fish and regnum: buck was a rap on the skull with the closed hand—doe a tug at the hair, dragging out many a lock. Those who bore no part in cobbing the victim were liable to be cobbed themselves—so were those who were so unlucky as not to be able to touch the hair of the victim, or who, while repeating the verses, neglected the prescribed rites—*i.e.*, the standing on one leg, closing one eye, elevating the left thumb, and concealing the teeth.'

I remember well that we schoolboys used to spit our faith, when required to make asseveration on any matters

we deemed important; and many a time have I given or received a challenge according to the following formula: 'I say, Bill, will you fight Jack?'—'Yes.' 'Jack, will you fight Bill?'—'Yes.' 'Best cock, spit over my little finger.' Jack and Bill both do so; and a pledge thus sealed is considered so sacred that no schoolboy would dare hang back from its fulfilment. Thus, fishwomen and hucksters generally spit upon the handsel, *i.e.* the first money they receive. One schoolboy belief we actually attempted to verify, with a daring worthy of a better cause. It was a bold venture, and we laid our plans well and secretly, so that none but the actors knew anything about it. Providing ourselves with a black cat, from whose fur every white hair had been carefully abstracted, we assembled on a dark winter night in the cathedral churchyard, and grouped ourselves within a circle, marked on the grass. We were bent on raising the evil spirit, and meant instantly to present him with poor pussy as an offering. The senior of the party read the Lord's Prayer backwards, and repeated some cabalistic verses; but the adjuration was not responded to, which perhaps was something of a relief to the actors. It may be that this divination has prevailed among boys; is it hence that they are sometimes called young dare-devils?

In the folk lore of Presbyterian Scotland we find, of course, no mention of Confirmation. Throughout England, a preference is, I believe, universally felt for the touch of the bishop's right hand over the left. Thus, not long ago, in Exeter, a poor woman presented herself, as a candidate for that rite, to one of the clergy of that city, who remembered her having been confirmed three years before. On his taxing her with this she could not deny it; but pleaded that she had had the bishop's left

hand then, and had been so uneasy ever since, that she did want to try her luck again! In the North of England, however, this evil is more defined; the unfortunate recipients of the left hand are doomed on the spot to a life of single blessedness. A friend tells me of an old Yorkshire woman, who came for confirmation a second, if not a third time, from a different motive. She had heard, she said, 'it was good for the rheumatiz!'

To pass on to marriage, the nucleus for a vast store of folk lore. The following rhymes show the importance of choosing an auspicious day for the ceremony; they express the popular belief of the county of Durham:—

Monday for wealth,
Tuesday for health,
Wednesday the best day of all:
Thursday for losses,
Friday for crosses,
And Saturday no luck at all.

This attribute of Thursday is curiously opposite to that which distinguishes it in Scandinavia, where, as Thor's-day, it is regarded as an auspicious day for marrying. The English tradition coincides however with the German, where it is held unlucky to marry on Thursday, probably because Thor is partly identified there with the devil.[1]

The unsuitableness of Lent for marrying and giving in marriage is bitterly expressed in the verse,

If you marry in Lent
You will live to repent.

But I fear that, in point of fact, the month of May is more avoided in Scotland than the season of Lent. The prejudice against marrying in May, which Lockhart calls a classical as well as a Scottish one, was respected in his own marriage, Sir Walter Scott hurrying away from

[1] See Kelly's Indo-European Tradition, page 293.

London that his daughter Sophia's wedding might take place before that inauspicious month commenced.

The portents for good or evil which surround Border marriages are, as given in the Wilkie MS., numerous indeed. It is unlucky for swine to cross the path in front of a wedding-party. Hence the old adage, 'The swine's run through it.' The presence of the bride's mother is inauspicious too. A wedding after sunset entails on the bride a joyless life, the loss of children, or an early grave. An allusion to this may be found in several Scottish songs. Thus there is one which begins, 'The bridegroom grat as the sun went down.' A wet day is deemed unlucky too, while a fine one is auspicious. Here, in fact, as all Christendom over,

Blest is the bride that the sun shines on!

Green, ever an ominous colour in the Lowlands of Scotland, must on no account be worn there at a wedding. The fairies, whose chosen colour it is, would resent the insult, and destroy the wearer. In fact, nothing green must make its appearance that day; kale and all other green vegetables are excluded from the wedding-dinner. With this exception, any good things in season may grace the board, and a pair of fowls must on no account be omitted. It is very important that the bride should receive the little bone called 'hug ma close' (*anglice* 'sidesman,' or side-bone), for she who gets it on her wedding-day is sure to be happy in her husband.

To rub shoulders with the bride or bridegroom is deemed an augury of speedy marriage; and, again, she who receives from the bride a piece of cheese, cut by her before leaving the table, will be the next bride among the company.

Dinner over, the bride sticks her knife into the cheese, and all at table endeavour to seize it. He who succeeds without cutting his fingers in the struggle, thereby ensures happiness in his married life. The knife is called 'the best man's prize,' since commonly the 'best man' secures it. Should he fail to do so, he will indeed be unfortunate in his matrimonial views. The knife is, at any rate, a prize for male hands only; the maidens try to possess themselves of a 'shaping' of the wedding-dress, for use in certain divinations regarding their future husbands. And the bride herself should wear something borrowed—for what reason I am not informed.

It should perhaps have been mentioned sooner, that as the newly-married wife enters her new home on returning from kirk, one of the oldest inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who has been stationed on the threshold, throws a plateful of short-bread over her head, so that it falls outside. A scramble ensues, for it is deemed very fortunate to get a piece of the short-bread, and dreams of sweethearts attend its being placed under the pillow. A variation of this custom extends as far south as the East Riding of Yorkshire, where, on the bride's arrival at her father's door, a plate of cake is flung from an upper window upon the crowd below. An augury is then drawn from the fate which attends the plate; the more pieces it breaks into the better; if it reach the ground unbroken, the omen is very unfavourable.

The custom of passing bridecake through the wedding-ring, and placing it under the pillow, to dream upon, and that of throwing a shoe after the bride and bridegroom, are sometimes claimed as peculiarly northern. If so, they have travelled southwards very steadily, for

they now prevail in every county in England. This last observance is usually said to be 'for luck,' but a writer in 'Notes and Queries' (vol. vii. p. 411) suggests that it is rather a symbol of renunciation of all right in the bride by her father or guardian, and the transference of it to her husband. He quotes Ps. lx. 8, 'Over Edom have I cast out my shoe,' as meaning, 'I have wholly cast it off;' and further illustrates the idea by a reference to Ruth iv. 7, 8. Ruth's kinsman, it will be remembered, refused to marry her, and to redeem her inheritance; therefore, 'as it was the custom in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, that a man plucked off his shoe and delivered it to his neighbour,' the kinsman plucked off his shoe, as a public renunciation of Ruth and of his own claim of premarriage.[1]

The northern counties of England have, however, their own exclusively local wedding customs. I am informed, by the Rev. J. Barnby, that a wedding in the Dales of Yorkshire is indeed a thing to see; that nothing can be imagined comparable to it in wildness and obstreperous mirth. The bride and bridegroom may possibly be a little subdued, but his friends are like men bereft of reason. They career round the bridal party like Arabs of the desert, galloping over ground on which, in cooler moments, they would hesitate even

[1] It may be enquired, however, whether there is any connexion between this custom and the usage of Swedish brides, to let a shoe slip off or drop a handkerchief, in the hope that the bridegroom, from politeness, will stoop to pick it up. If he does so it will be his lot to submit, *i.e.* to bend his back, all through his married life. A good deal of Swedish bridal folk lore points to the desire for mastery: *e.g.*, the bride must endeavour to see her bridegroom before he sees her, to place her foot before his during the marriage ceremony, to sit down first in the bridal chair, and all that she may bear sway.—Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 108.

to walk a horse—shouting all the time, and firing volleys from the guns they carry with them. Next they will dash along the road in advance of the party, carrying the whisky-bottle, and compelling everyone they meet to pledge the newly-married pair. 'One can guess,' he adds, 'what the Border mosstroopers were, by seeing the Dalesmen at a wedding.' In rural parts, too, of the county of Durham, the bridal party is escorted to church by men armed with guns, which they fire again and again close to the ears of bride and bridesmaids, terrifying them sometimes not a little. At Guisborough, in Cleveland, I am told that these guns are fired over the heads of the newly-married couple all the way from church. There, too, it has been customary for the bridegroom to offer a handful of money together with the ring to the clergyman; out of this the fees were taken, and the overplus returned.

Through Cleveland, he who gives the bride away claims the first kiss in right of his temporary paternity. One clerical friend of mine, however, declares that it is the privilege of the parson who ties the knot; and though he cannot aver that he has ever availed himself of it, he knows an old north-country clergyman who was reported so to do. Another tells me that a brother-clergyman, a stranger in the country, after performing a marriage in a country village in Yorkshire, was surprised to see the party keep together, as if expecting something more. 'What are you waiting for?' he asked, at last. 'Please, sir,' was the bridegroom's answer, 'ye've no kissed Molly.' And my old friend, the late Dr. Raine, used to relate how the Rev. T. E., Sacrist of the Cathedral and Vicar of Merrington, invariably kept up the custom when he performed the marriage ceremony, and this plainly as a matter of

obligation, for he was one of the most shy and retiring of men. Nay, I can testify that within the last ten years, a fair lady from the county of Durham, who was married in the South of England, so undoubtedly reckoned upon the clerical salute, that, after waiting for it in vain, she boldly took the initiative, and bestowed a kiss upon the much-amazed south-country vicar.

A singular local custom still exists in the village of Whitburn, near Sunderland—that of sending what are called hot pots to church, to meet the bride and bridegroom on coming out. A gentleman of that place thus describes what took place at his own marriage last year: 'After the vestry scene, the bridal party having formed in procession for leaving the church, we were stopped in the porch by a row of five or six women, ranged to our left hand, each holding a large mug with a cloth over it. These were in turn presented to me, and handed by me to my wife, who, after taking a sip, returned it to me. It was then passed to the next couple, and so on in the same form to all the party. The composition in these mugs was mostly, I am sorry to say, simply horrible; one or two were very fair, one very good. They are sent to the church by all classes, and are considered a great compliment. I have never heard of this custom elsewhere. Here it has existed within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, and an aged fisherwoman, who has been married some sixty-five years, tells me that at her wedding there were seventy hot pots.'

Another old wedding usage seems confined to Yorkshire. In remote parts of that county it is the custom to pour a kettle-full of boiling water over the doorstep, just after the bride has left her old home; and they say that before it dries up, another marriage is sure to be agreed on.

In many of the rural parts of Cumberland this curious

practice exists. When the lover of a Cumbrian maiden proves unfaithful to her, she is, by way of consolation, rubbed with pease-straw by the neighbouring lads; and should a Cumbrian youth lose his sweetheart, through her marriage with his rival, the same sort of comfort is administered to him by the lasses of the village. This is illustrated by the following verse from an old Cumbrian ballad:—

> For Jock the young Laird was new wedded,
> His auld sweetheart Jennie linked wae,
> While some were aw tittern and flyein
> The lads rubbed her down wi' pease-straw.

This reminds me of a custom very common among the schoolboys in the neighbouring county of Durham, when, if a boy is so unlucky as to fall into trouble, and so weak as to show it by crying, he is quickly beset by his companions, who rub him down with their coat-sleeves, and that in such rough style as to make him forget past troubles in present discomfort.

It is unlucky for a woman to marry a man whose surname begins with the same letter as her own, for:

> If you change the name and not the letter,
> You change for the worse and not for the better.

A Yorkshire wedding is, by rights, wound up by a race for a ribbon. In Cleveland this ribbon is given by the bridegroom, as he leaves the church, and all who choose run for it, in sight of the house where the wedding-feast is held. All the racers, winner and losers alike, are entitled to a glass of spirits each; and accordingly, as soon as the race is over, they present themselves at the house, and ask for their 'lowance without any particular invitation. At the village of Melsonby, near Darlington, and in the adjoining district,

the bride was placed as winning-post, holding the ribbon in her hand, and the winner claimed a kiss on receiving it. I am told that, on one occasion, the bride, being a Methodist, refused, from conscientious scruples, to give the ribbon. There was much dissatisfaction through the place, and the youths revenged themselves after the traditional manner of punishing stingy brides. They fired the stithy at her; that is, they placed a charge of gunpowder in the stith, or anvil of the blacksmith's shop, and fired it as she passed on her way from church.

In the neighbourhood of Leeds, and I believe in the North of England generally, it is counted unlucky for a young woman to attend church when her banns are published; her children run the risk of being deaf and dumb. But there is no chance at all of a family, unless, when she retires on the wedding-night, her bridesmaids lay her stockings across.

I may close our collection of bridal folk lore by two little sayings rife in the county of Durham. The first of the bridal pair to go to sleep on the wedding-night, will be the first to die; and the wife who loses her wedding ring incurs the loss of her husband's affection. The breaking of the ring forebodes death.

The portents of death related in the Wilkie MS. are numerous indeed. Thus he who meets a Border funeral is certain soon to die, unless he bares his head, turns, and accompanies the procession some distance. If the coffin is carried by bearers he must take a lift. This done, if he bows to the company, he may turn and go on his way without fear.

Again, if, at a funeral, the sun shines brightly on the face of one among the attendants, it marks him for the next to be laid in that churchyard; or if the sound of

the 'mools' falling on the coffin be heard by any person at a considerable distance from the spot, it presages a death in that person's family.

A crowing hen is looked upon with fear and suspicion far and wide. According to the Northamptonshire proverb,

> A whistling woman and crowing hen,
> Are neither fit for God nor men.

In Normandy they say, 'Une poule qui chante le coqet et une fille qui siffle, portent malheur dans la maison;' and in Cornwall, 'A whistling woman and a crowing hen are the two unluckiest things under the sun.'

The former delinquent is much dreaded on the coast of Yorkshire by the seafaring part of the population. A few years ago, when a party of friends were going on board a vessel at Scarborough, the captain astonished them by declining to allow one of them to enter it. 'Not that young lady,' he said; 'she whistles.' Curiously enough, the vessel was lost on her next voyage; so, had the poor girl set foot on it, the misfortune would certainly have been ascribed to her. It is remarkable that no miner in Devonshire or Cornwall whistles underground, or allows others to do so. I have conversed with them about it, and do not gather that they think it unlucky, but unseemly and irreverent. All assure me that it is never done in a mine even by the youngest boy.

A crowing hen is counted on the Borders a forerunner of death. Thus a few years ago, we are told, an old woman in the parish of East Kilbride heard one of her hens crow loudly on the top of a dyke before her house. She mentioned the circumstance to a neighbour, saying that no good would come of it, and accordingly her

husband soon died. About a month afterwards she heard the creature again, and within a few days tidings reached her of the death of her only son. A week later the hen crowed once more, and the eldest daughter died. On this the old woman was roused to desperation; she seized the warning bird, wrung its neck, and burned it.

Mr. Wilkie records the following singular portent of death, which took place about seven years before it was related to him:—'A farmer's wife, who resided on the banks of the Ale, near St. Boswell's, looking out at window, thought she saw a funeral approaching; and at once mentioned the circumstance to some neighbours, then with her in the house. They ran out to look, but came back and sat down again, saying she must be mistaken, for there was nothing of the kind to be seen; the woman felt restless, however, and out of spirits; she could not help going to the window again, and again she saw the funeral moving on. Her friends ran out-of-doors and looked along the road, but still could perceive nothing; a third time she went to the window, and exclaimed, "It is fast coming on, and will soon be at the door." No other person could discern anything; but within half an hour a confused noise was heard outside, and the farm-servants entered, bearing her husband's lifeless body. He had died suddenly, by a fall from his cart.'[1]

[1] With this Border portent, compare the following narration:—'Dr. Abraham Vander Meer, an upright and zealous Reformer, relates in his Memorabilia, that his grandmother, while residing at the Hague, being one summer night unable to sleep, placed herself, about four o'clock in the morning, at the window, and there saw a coffin coming up the Spui Straab, but without anyone else seeming to notice it. It moved on until it stood up erect before a house, where it vanished in an open window. Before six weeks had expired every inmate of that house had died of the plague.'—Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 211.

The presages of death on the Border are very numerous: *e.g.*, the sound of bells in the night, the chirping of crickets, lights of a circular form seen in the air, when there is no fire or candle, the dead chack or death-watch, a call by night or day in the voice of some absent person, a gripe of the arm or leg by an invisible clay-cold hand, the howling of dogs before your house-door, hens bringing off a brood all hen-birds, or laying eggs with double yolks, the birth of lambs deformed or with superfluous limbs, the chirping of fish long after they have been taken out of the water, sounds as though the house were falling down, magpies flying round the house or preceding you on the way to church, ravens croaking on or near it, swords falling out of their scabbards—all these are tokens of approaching death; but the most fatal of all is for a man to see his own wraith walking to or from him at noon or before sunset.

The wraith is an apparition exactly like a living person, and its appearance, whether to that person or to another, is commonly thought an omen of death. These apparitions are sometimes called 'fetches,' in Cumberland 'swarths,' and in Yorkshire 'waffs.' Of waff I have two examples, from the East Riding of Yorkshire. The first was narrated, to the clergyman from whom I received it, by an old man of Danby, in Cleveland, eighty-two years of age, and highly respectable as to character. Some years before he was passing one evening by an uncle's house, and, seeing the glow of firelight streaming through the window, looked in. To his great surprise he saw his uncle, who had long been 'bed-fast' in the room above, seated in his former place in the 'newkin.' He was astonished—still there could be no mistake; the form and features were those of his relation, and he further assured himself of the fact by a second look. He entered

the house to obtain an explanation; but the room was dark, the seat empty, and the old man lying upstairs in his bed. But the old man's death took place before long.

A second case of this kind is said to have happened, at Whitby, to a tradesman suffering from stone, and ordered to the hospital at York for an operation. Before he set out, the patient said it was in vain, he should not return alive; he had seen his own waff, and knew he should die during the operation, or after it. His belief was verified: the operation was performed, but he did not long survive it.[1]

The Vicar of Stamfordham has kindly communicated to me two cases of 'wraiths,' or apparitions, from his parish. The first is of a poor woman, called Esther Morton, of Black Heddon, who went out gathering sticks on the ground of a neighbouring farmer. Looking up, she saw him before her, and turned quickly to get out of his way. Then she remembered he was ill in bed and could not possibly be there, so she went home much alarmed, and found he had just died.

Again, one William Elliott, of the same place, saw his neighbour Mary Brown cross the fold-yard and disappear in a straw house. Knowing her to be very ill, he made instant enquiries, and discovered that she had died at the moment of his seeing her.

These Yorkshire stories recall to my memory an incident in which the 'waff' was no prophet of death, but an instrument for saving life. The musician Gluck, Picini's rival in Paris about 100 years ago, made some stay in one of the Belgian cities—Ghent, I believe. While there he was accustomed to spend the evening with friends, and, returning late to his lodging, to let himself in with a key. One moonlight evening, while

going home as usual, he observed before him a figure resembling himself. It took every turn through the streets which he was accustomed to take, and finally, on reaching the door, drew out a key, opened it, and entered. On this the musician turned round in some perturbation, went back to his friends, and begged to be taken in for the night. The next morning they accompanied him to his lodging, and found that the heavy wooden roof of Gluck's sleeping-room had fallen down in the night and covered the floor. It was plain that had he passed the night there he must have been killed.

But to return to the omens in the Wilkie MS. Some of them are more or less remarked in every part of our island—such as the death-watch, the croaking raven, or the solitary magpie; nor is it matter of astonishment that when the mind is impressed, by the awe of sickness and impending death in our household, we are prone to notice and brood over sounds and sights which seem to connect themselves with our anxieties and sorrows. The howling of dogs is a widely-known death-omen. We find it in every part of our island, in France and Germany, and even in Constantinople. A close observer, who has seen the omen given, and noted its fulfilment, describes the dog as very uneasy till it can get under the death-chamber. If the house stands within an inclosure, and it cannot get in, it will run round the premises, or pace up and down before them. If it succeeds in forcing an entry, it will stop under the window, howl horribly, finish with three tremendous barks, and hurry away. Mr. Kelly, who relates this,[1] adds that the dog is an attendant on the dead in the German as in the Aryan mythology, that dogs see ghosts,

[1] Indo-European Tradition and Folk Lore, p. 110.

and that when Hela, the goddess of death, walks abroad, invisible to human eyes, she is seen by the dogs. Again, in the North of England the flight of jackdaws or swallows down the chimney is held to presage death, as well as the appearance of a trio of butterflies flying together. So does a winding-sheet, or piece of curled tallow in the candle, called in Scotland a 'dead spale.' Three raps given by no human hand are said also to give warning of death. Such were heard a few years ago, at Windy Walls, near Stamfordham, in Northumberland, on the outside of a window-shutter, and the same night a man belonging to the house fell accidentally off a cart and was killed. Again, if thirteen persons sit down to eat together one of them will shortly die. This belief is widely spread, and doubtless originated in the remembrance of the thirteen who sat down at the last Paschal Supper, and of the fate of Judas.

Another death-omen is the crowing of a cock at dead of night. A lady in the East Riding of Yorkshire tells me that a few years ago, a cook, who had recently come to her from the north of that county, told her one morning, with tears in her eyes, that she should not be able to stay long in her place, for her sister was dead or dying. The mistress naturally concluded that the tidings had come by post that morning, but it turned out that such was not the case. The cock had crowed at midnight on two following nights, and as she had not heard from her sister for some time, she was doubtless ill, if not already dead. Happily the good woman's fears were groundless, and she lived some time in my informant's service.

Again, the flying or hovering of birds around a house, and their resting on the window-sill, or tapping against the pane, portends death. This belief is widely spread,

and I cannot divest myself of the notion that there is a sympathy between us and the animal creation, which comes to view in times of sorrow. I am permitted to mention that the death of a clergyman of some eminence in the town of Hull, recently, was preceded by the flight of a pure white pigeon around the house, and its resting again and again on his window-sill. And the Vicar of Fishlake, in the West Riding, informs me that one of his parishioners mentioned the same portent to him; telling him, as an illustration, of a Primitive Methodist preacher, a very worthy man, who had fallen down dead in the pulpit soon after giving out his text. 'And not many hours before,' she went on, 'I had seen a white pigeon light on a tree hard by, and I'd said to a neighbour I were sure summat were going to happen.'

The following form of divination seems purely Northumbrian. After a death has taken place in a family, the straw or chaff from the bed of the departed is taken into an open place and burned. Among its ashes the survivors look for a footprint, and that member of the family whose foot fits the impression will be the next to die.

Yorkshire too has its own manner of enquiring who will be taken from this world. Those who are curious to know about the death of their fellow-parishioners, must keep watch in the church-porch on St. Mark's Eve, for an hour on each side of midnight for three successive years. On the third year they will see the forms of those doomed to die within the twelvemonth passing one by one into the church. If the watcher fall asleep during his vigil he will die himself during the year. I have heard, however, of one case in which the intimation was given by the sight of the watcher's own form and features. It is that of an old woman at

Scarborough, who kept St. Mark's vigil in the porch of St. Mary's in that town about eighty years ago. Figure after figure glided into the church, turning round to her as they went in, so that she recognised their familiar faces. At last a figure turned and gazed at her; she knew herself, screamed, and fell senseless to the ground. Her neighbours found her there in the morning, and carried her home, but she did not long survive the shock. An old man who recently died at Fishlake, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was in the habit of keeping these vigils, and was in consequence an object of some dread to his neighbours. The old sexton at —— did so too, in order, it was said, to count the gains of the coming year. I have heard of the rite in Cleveland too, and at Teesdale, and one instance has come before me at Ford in Northumberland.

Another mode of divining into futurity has also been resorted to in Yorkshire, called cauff-riddling, and was thus practised. The barn-doors must be set wide open, a riddle and some chaff must be procured, and those who wish to pry into the future must go into the barn at midnight, and in turn commence the process of riddling. Should the riddler be doomed to die during the year, two persons will be seen passing by the open barn-doors carrying a coffin; in the other case nothing will be visible.

Not many years ago two men and a woman went to a barn near Malton, in Yorkshire, on St. Mark's Eve, to riddle cauff. All the requisite observances were attended to; the men took their turns, but nothing was seen; then the woman began to riddle. Scarcely had the chaff began to fall on the floor when all saw the ominous pair of coffin-bearers passing by. There was a moment's pause; the men rushed out to look, but all

had disappeared; there was no living creature in sight. The woman died within the year. This story was related to my informant by one who knew the persons concerned, and spoke of them by name.

The rites accompanying the saining or blessing of a corpse in the Scottish Lowlands are given at some length in the Wilkie MS. They are as follows:—

When a body has been washed and laid out, one of the oldest women present must light a candle, and wave it three times around the corpse. Then she must measure three handfuls of common salt into an earthenware plate, and lay it on the breast. Lastly, she arranges three 'toom' or empty dishes on the hearth, as near as possible to the fire; and all the attendants going out of the room return into it backwards, repeating this 'rhyme of saining:'

Thrice the torchie, thrice the saltie,
Thrice the dishies toom for "loffie" (*i.e.* praise)
These three times three ye must wave round
The corpse, until it sleep sound.
Sleep sound and wake nane,
Till to heaven the soul's gane.
If ye want that soul to dee
Fetch the torch frae th' Elleree;
Gin ye want that soul to live,
Between the dishes place a sieve,
An it sall have a fair, fair shrive.

This rite is called Dishaloof. Sometimes, as is named in the verses, a sieve is placed between the dishes, and she who is so fortunate as to place her hand in it, is held to do most for the soul. If all miss the sieve, it augurs ill for the departed. Meanwhile all the windows in the house are opened, in order to give the soul free egress. The dishes are placed near the fire, from a notion that the soul resembles a flame, and

hovers round the hearth for a certain period after death.

In some of the western counties, however, the dishes are set upon a table or a 'bunker' (as they call a long chest) close to the deathbed; and it is actually said that while the attendants sit with their hands in the dishes they 'spae,' or tell fortunes, sing songs, or repeat rhymes, in the middle of which the corpse, it is averred, has been known to rise frowning, and place its cold hand in one of the dishes, thus presaging death to her whose hand was in that dish already.

The Dishaloof so far over, the company join hands and dance round the dishes, singing this burden, 'A dis, a dis, a dis, a green griss, a dis, a dis, a dis.' Bread, cheese, and spirits are then placed on the table, and, when the company have partaken of them, they are at liberty to go home.

The candle for 'saining' should be procured from a suspected witch or wizard, a seer or Elleree, or from a person with 'schloof,' or flat feet, 'ringlit-eyed,' that is with a great portion of white in the eye, or 'lang-lipit,' that is, with thick projecting lips; for all these persons are unlucky, and, in this affair, unlucky really means fortunate in the extreme. Unless the old mosstroopers are belied, they preferred for saining a torch made from the fat of a slaughtered enemy, or at least of a murdered man. The saining candle must be kept burning through the night, and the table covered with a cloth so long as the dead body remains in the house. Some people also make a point of turning the cat out-of-doors all the time.

The corpse must be watched, till its burial, by one of its kindred and a stranger, who may be relieved, when weary, by another relation and another stranger. In point of fact, however, they are seldom left to themselves.

Neighbours assemble from a great distance to join them, and keep what is called 'a sitting' while the sun is above the horizon, or after dark 'a lykewake.' These gatherings are common in North Wales also, but whereas the Welsh pass the night in reading the Scriptures and singing Psalms, a strange sort of merriment seems to have characterised the Scotch 'lykewake.' Songs were sung and games played—Blind Harrie, for example, according to the old song of the 'Humble Beggar :'.

It happened ill, it happened worse,
  It happened sae that he did dee,
And wha d'ye think war at the lykewake
  But lads and lasses o' high degree ?

Some were blithe and some were sad,
  And some they played at Blind Harrie,
But suddenly uprose the auld carle
  'I rede ye gude folk tak tent o' me.'

Games at cards are also played on these occasions, the coffin, incredible as it may appear, being the card-table, while the round table on which the candle is placed may on no account be used. It is imperative that every watcher at a lykewake should touch the corpse with his hand, to keep him from dreaming of the dead, or brooding over any evil occurrence which may have taken place during the watch. For things do not always go right on these occasions. Thus tradition tells how once the corpse arose, sat upon the bed, and frowned dreadfully, though without speaking, an unseen hand having previously moved the plate of salt to the rack of the bed. It was plain that something essential had been omitted in the saining, or that the attendants had been performing some unhallowed rites. An old woman, eminent for her piety, was hastily summoned in

this emergency. She came and found the room empty, the attendants having all fled in terror. Drawing her Bible from her pocket, the old woman began to read it aloud, on which the corpse ceased to frown, and fell slowly back upon the bed. Closing her book, she prayed aloud; then covered the corpse, replaced the plate of salt upon its breast, and prayed again. All continuing still, she fetched water, washed her hands, and brought in the terrified attendants, who were huddled together round the door of the house, assuring them that if they abstained from evil amusements the devil would not molest them any more.

On another occasion it was reported that while hide-and-seek was going on at a lykewake, some young men took the dead body out of the coffin, and laid one of their number in its place to hide. Search being made for the youth, he was discovered in the coffin, quite dead, but the corpse they had come to watch could nowhere be found. It was believed in the neighbourhood that it had been carried off by the fairies, and that the young man had been slain by the evil spirit.

A paper in Richardson's 'Local Historian's Table Book' (vol. iii. p. 66) confirms and illustrates this account of a lykewake on the Borders. It adds a few particulars: the shrouding of the looking-glass, to intimate that all vanity, all care for earthly beauty, are over with the deceased, and the stopping and shrouding of the clock, to show that with him time is over; and it painfully evinces that the solemnity of the occasion did not preclude practical jokes, which to us appear profane and sacrilegious in the highest degree.

Some traces of these Scottish rites may be found in widely-separated parts of our Island. I have seen the plate of salt on the breast of the dead in the North of

England, and heard of its use in the Isle of Man, as well as in Wales, Hertfordshire, and Somersetshire. Probably its use has been very general, and this as an emblem of incorruption and eternity.

Sir Walter Scott considered that the word 'sleet,' in the chorus of the lykewake dirge, is a corruption of 'selt' or 'salt:'

> This ae night, this ae night,
> Every night and all,
> Fire and sleete and candlelighte
> And Christe receive thy sawle.

The custom of opening the door at the time of death is also widespread. I have heard of it as far south as Spain, and also in Germany. My readers cannot forget how at the smuggler's death in the Kaim of Durncleugh, Meg Merrilies unbars the door, and lifts the latch, saying:—

> Open lock, end strife,
> Come death, and pass life.

As to the touching of the corpse, by those who come to look at it, this is still expected by the poor of Durham, on the part of those who come to their house while a dead body is lying in it, in token that they wished no ill to the departed, and were in peace and amity with him.

No doubt this custom grew out of the belief, once universal among Northern nations, that a corpse would bleed at the touch of the murderer. In King James the First's 'Dæmonology', we read: 'In a secret murder, if the dead carkasse be at any time thereafter handled by the murderer, it will gush out of blood, as if the blood were crying to Heaven for revenge of the murderer.' And it is mentioned in a note to chap. v. of the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' that this bleeding of a corpse

was urged as an evidence of guilt in the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh, as late as 1688. The practice of covering or removing the looking-glass from the chamber of death extends into the northern counties of England, and this not only for the cause assigned above. The invisible world trenches closely upon the visible one in the chamber of death; and I believe that a dread is felt of some spiritual being imaging himself forth in the blank surface of the mirror.[1]

I may here mention that in Denmark it is forbidden to bury a corpse in the clothes of a living person, lest, as the clothes rot, that person wastes away and perishes. It is said there too that one must not weep over the dying, still less allow tears to fall on them; it will hinder their resting in the grave.

It is a common belief along the east coast of England, from Northumberland to Kent, that deaths mostly occur during the falling of the tide. As Mr. Peggotty explained to David Copperfield by poor Barkis' bedside, 'People can't die along the coast, except when the tide's pretty nigh out. They can't be born unless its pretty nigh in—not properly born till flood. He's agoing out with the tide—he's agoing out with the tide. It's ebb at half arter three, slack-water half an hour. If he lives till it turns, he'll hold his own till past the flood, and go out with the next tide.' And after many hours

[1] I suspect that the true reason for shrouding the looking-glass before a funeral is that given me in Warwickshire, that if you look into a mirror in the death-chamber, you will see the corpse looking over your shoulder. I have heard the same superstition in Devonshire. In the West Riding of Yorkshire there is a strong feeling against burying a woman with her rings or jewellery. A gentleman told me that when his mother died, he was desirous of leaving on her hand her wedding-ring, but was reproved for the wish by the women who laid her out. 'Ye mun no send her to God wi' her trinkets about her,' they said.—S.B.G.

watching, 'it being low-water he went out with the tide.' In some extracts which I have seen of old date, from the parish register of Heslidon, near Hartlepool, the state of the tide at the time of death is named: 'The xith daye of Maye, A.D. 1595, at vi. of ye clocke in the morninge, being full water, Mr. Henrye Mitford, of Hoolam, died at Newcastel, and was buried the xvi. daie, being Sondaie, at evening prayer; the hired preacher maid ye sermon.'—'The xvii. daie of Maie, at xii. of ye clock at noon, being lowe water, Mrs. Barbara Mitford died, and was buried the xviii. daie of Maie, at ix. of the clocke. Mr. Holsworth maid ye sermon.' Indeed, the belief must be of some antiquity, and must have found its way inland, since Sir John Falstaff is recorded to have 'parted even just between twelve and one, e'en at turning o' the tide.' I cannot hear of it on the south or west coast of England. A friend suggests to me that there may be some slight foundation for this belief in the change of temperature, which undoubtedly does take place on the change of tide, and which may act on the flickering spark of life, extinguishing it as the ebbing sea recedes.

The obtuseness of feeling with regard to death, shown in the Border Lykewake, certainly extends southward. A friend tells me of two instances in Yorkshire, where persons have had their coffins made some years before their death, and have used them to keep bread and cheese in. Such was certainly the custom of an old brother at Sherburn Hospital, who was well known to many of the inhabitants of Durham. I myself saw the coffin set up against the wall, and witnessed the old man opening it to take out a jug of milk, which he offered to the young lad who accompanied me. The Master of Sherburn Hospital informs me that this old brother was

in his way a luxurious man, with a due regard for creature comforts; and that, having a decidedly Roman nose, he had caused a corresponding cavity to be made in the inside of the coffin lid, for fear the projecting member should be inconvenienced. An old Yorkshire woman was, I am told, very explicit in the directions she gave about her coffin. She ordered two holes to be made in its lid, that, when the devil came in at one hole to catch her, she might slip out at the other!

A very singular belief prevails along the Borders, of which I find no mention in any book of folk lore, though there is this passing allusion to it in 'Pennant's Tour in Scotland:'—'All fire is extinguished where a corpse is kept, and it is reckoned so ominous for a dog or cat to pass over it, that the poor animal is killed without mercy.' Two instances of this slaughter were recently related to the Rev. J. F. Bigge, by an old Northumbrian hind. In one case, just as a funeral was about to leave the house, the cat jumped over the coffin, and no one would move till the cat was destroyed. In the other, as a funeral party were coming from a lonely house on a fell, carrying the coffin, because they could not procure a cart, they set it down to rest themselves, and a colly dog jumped over it. It was felt by all that the dog must be killed, without hesitation, before they proceeded farther, and killed it was.

It is said, in the county of Durham, that the bodies of the drowned will float on the ninth day; and again, that if a gun be fired over a dead body lying at the bottom of the sea or river, the concussion will break the gall-bladder, and cause the body to float. A friend informs me that he has seen this done twice at Stockton, but without success. He also tells me that a loaf weighted with quicksilver, if allowed to float on the

water, is said to swim towards and stand over the place where the body lies. This is a very widely-spread belief. I have heard of it not only in several parts of England, but in Ireland, and among the North-American Indians. To its firm hold in the city of Durham I can myself bear witness. When a boy, I have seen persons endeavouring to discover the corpses of the drowned in this manner in the River Wear, near to Stoker's Wall; and ten years ago, the friends of one Christopher Lumley sought for his body in the Smallhope, near Lanchester, in the county of Durham, by the aid of a loaf of bread with a lighted candle in it. Indeed, the same means were practised in the autumn of the year 1860, within two miles of the city of Durham.. A little child named Charles Colling fell into the Wear at Shincliffe, on the 21st of October in that year, and was drowned. His friends, after vainly trying the usual methods of finding the body, charged a loaf of bread with quicksilver, and floated it on the stream. Long and earnestly was its course watched, but all in vain; it floated onwards without pausing to mark the resting-place of the little child, and though the body was ultimately recovered it was by other means. It is remarkable that a somewhat similar practice prevails in Ireland, and even among the North-American Indians.

The old superstition that no one can die in a bed containing the feathers of pigeons or game-fowl, can scarcely be called local, for we hear of it in many different parts of England. Still it does hold its ground in the North, and in Yorkshire the same is said of cock's feathers. The Russian peasantry, too, have a strong feeling against using pigeon's feathers in beds. They consider it sacrilegious, the dove being the emblem of the Holy Spirit. Some Yorkshire people declare that

no one can die easy on any bed, and will lay a dying man on the floor, to facilitate the departure of the soul.

A singular circumstance has been related to me, as having occurred a few years ago at a funeral, in the village of Stranton, near West Hartlepool.

The vicar was standing at the churchyard gate awaiting the arrival of the funeral party, when to his surprise the whole group, who had arrived within a few yards of him, suddenly wheeled round and made the circuit of the churchyard wall, thus traversing its west, north, and east boundaries, and making the distance some five or six times greater than was necessary. The vicar, astonished at the proceeding, asked the sexton the reason of so extraordinary a movement. The reply was as follows, 'Why, ye wad no hae them carry the dead again the sun; the dead maun aye 'go wi' the sun.'

This custom is doubtless an ancient British or Celtic one, and corresponds with the Highland usage of making the deazil, or walking three times round a person according to the course of the sun. Old Highlanders will still make the deazil around those to whom they wish well. To go round the person in the opposite direction, or 'withershins,' is an evil incantation, and brings ill-fortune.

It is curious to compare this Yorkshire custom of carrying the dead with the living to the Welsh usage, mentioned by Pennant.[1] Speaking of Skir'og, in North Wales, he says: 'When a corpse is carried to church from any part of the town, the bearers take care to carry it, so that the corpse may be on the right hand through the way, be it nearer, or be it less trouble to

[1] Brand's Pop. Ant. vol. ii. p. 285.

go on the other side, nor will they bring it through any other way than the north gate.'[1]

It is a Northumbrian belief that three funerals constantly follow one another in quick succession, an opinion to which we may find a parallel in Durham, where it is a matter of common remark, that if the cathedral bell tolls once it tolls thrice with little intermission. A Buckinghamshire variation is to this effect: if the clock strikes while the bell is tolling, there will be another death within the week. A friend from that county informs me also, that whereas it was a rule in her parish that the bell should only be tolled in the daytime, it was once heard by the clergyman at five o'clock

[1] This prejudice existed very strongly in Iceland in ancient times. According to the *Vatnsdocla saga*, a woman, by going against the sun round a house and waving a cloth, brought down a landslip against the house (Vatnsdocla, s. c. 363; Laudnama, iii. and p. 181). The date of this event was about A.D. 990. So a magical storm was laid (Vatns. c. 47; and also Thorfinn's S. Karlsefris, c. 9, p. 11; Drop lang an Sonar, s. p. 10): 'The hag did not lie down to sleep that night, she was so restless. The weather was cold without, a keen frost, and the sky clear. She went several times against the sun round the house, set her face in all directions, and turned her nose up. And as she thus went about, the weather began to change. There rose a dense fog, and after that an icy blast, and an avalanche broke off on the mountain-side, and the snow shot down on the farm of Berg, and twelve men died of it. The signs of the fall are visible now.' (Gisla S. Sarssonar, p. 33.) Again: 'The hag took her knife, and cut on the log runes, and smeared them with her blood, and chanted charms over them. Then she went many times against the sun round the log, and muttered many troll-like sayings. After that she had the log rolled down to the sea, and she said that it would be washed to Drangey, where it would work mischief to Grettir.' (Gretta, c. 81.) To go against the sun is 'andsocles' in Icelandic. I have heard in Yorkshire, that if you walk three times round the room against the sun at midnight, and in perfect darkness, and then look in the glass, you will see the devil's face leering out of it at you. Again, on All Souls' Day (I believe), if two people walk round the room at midnight, and in darkness, going contrary ways, they will never meet; one of the two will have been spirited away.—S.B.G.

on a winter's morning, and he accordingly sent to the church to have it stopped for two hours. The deceased person was a wealthy farmer, and his widow complained bitterly over the delay in the tolling. 'It was so cruel in Mr. Y.,' she said, 'to keep the poor soul those hours a-waiting!' Now the 'passing bell' was supposed in former times to serve two purposes: it called on all good Christians within hearing to pray for the departing spirit, and it scared away the evil spirits, who were watching to seize it, or at least to scare and terrify it. Evidently the widow thought that for want of these helps the progress of her husband's soul to its rest was impeded.

There is, I am informed, among old-fashioned families in Northumberland, a *feeling* that the death of an inmate is a token of the Divine wrath, and that this wrath rests on the house until after the visit of the parish clergyman, which is therefore anxiously looked for and much valued. A friend informs me that he well remembers, when a curate in Northumberland, some twenty-four years ago, being told by a clergyman of that county that he had been frequently asked to 'bless the house' after a death had taken place in it.

## CHAPTER II.

### DAYS AND SEASONS.

Christmas—The Sword Dancers—Mummers—New Year's Eve—New Year's Day—Shrove Tuesday—Palm Sunday—Good Friday—Easter Day—Ascension Day—The Harvest, Mell Supper, and Kern Baby—St. Agnes' Fast—April 1st—St. Valentine's Day—May 29th—St. Michael's Day—All Hallowe'en—St. Andrew's Day.

If we pass on to days and seasons, we shall find them marked in the North by time-honoured customs, unobserved for the most part elsewhere. Of course we must not look in Scotland for any note of Christmas, but in the English border-counties there is much to mark this blessed season. Yule-cakes are spread on our tables at Christmas-tide, and the yule-log lights up our hearths as duly as does the ashen faggot in Devonshire.[1] In the city of Durham, and in many other northern towns, an old woman carries from house to house, on Christmas Eve, figures of the Virgin and Child, and shows them to the young people while she sings the old carol,—

God rest you, merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Saviour was born on Christmas Day,
To save our souls from Satan's fold, which long had gone astray.
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy!

We do not come to your house to beg nor to borrow,
But we do come to your house, to sing all sorrow away;
The merry time of Christmas is drawing very near,
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy!

[1] A Devonshire friend informs me of the legend connected with this west-country observance. It is said that the Divine Infant at Bethlehem was first washed and dressed by a fire of ashwood.

We do not come to your house to beg for bread and cheese,
But we do come to your house to give us what you please ;
The merry time of Christmas is drawing very near,
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy!

God bless the master of this house, the mistress also,
And all the little children, that round the table go,
And all their kith and kindred, that travel far and near;
And we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Children carry about these figures through the West Riding of Yorkshire in what they call milly-boxes, a corruption of 'My Lady.' The boxes are lined with spice, oranges, and sugar. They call this 'going a wassailing.'

Later in the evening, the streets of many a Northumbrian town (I use the word in its fullest meaning) echo the same carol, or the yet finer one 'Christians awake, salute the happy morn!' In the West Riding the singers are dressed in the most fanciful attire, and are called 'mummers.' Throughout the district of Cleveland they carry about with them a 'bessel cup,' more properly a wassail cup, together with figures of the Virgin and Child, placed in a box, and surrounded with such ornaments as they can collect. To send these singers away unrequited is to forfeit good luck for the year. No meat is eaten there on Christmas Eve, doubtless because it is a fast of the Church; the supper there consists of frumety, or wheat boiled in milk, with spice and sugar, and of fruit-tarts. At its close the yule-cake and cheese are cut and partaken of, while the master taps a fresh cask of ale. This cake and cheese are offered through the season to every visitor who calls. At Horbury, near Wakefield, and at Dewsbury, on Christmas Eve is rung the 'devil's knell:' a hundred strokes, then a pause, then three strokes, three strokes, and three strokes again.

But to return to Cleveland. The yule-log (or clog) and yule-candles are duly burned there on Christmas Eve, the carpenter supplying his customers with the former, the grocer with the latter. It would be most unlucky to light log or candle before the proper time. The whole season has a festive character, and visiting and card-playing are kept up throughout it. Christmas-boxes, however, are not common in Cleveland. New Year's Day is the time there for making presents, as in the eastern counties is St. Thomas' Day. The poor, and especially poor widows, go from house to house on this last day, asking for Christmas gifts. This custom prevails also in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where the widows ask and commonly receive at the farmers' houses a small measure of wheat, and they call it 'going a Thomasing.'

St. Stephen's Day in Cleveland is devoted to hunting and shooting, it being held that the game-laws are not in force on that day; but I am not aware that the apple-trees are deliberately aimed at, as is the case in Devonshire, with the view of ensuring a good crop of apples.

The old custom of hanging up a stocking to receive Christmas presents, a custom which the pilgrim-fathers carried to America and bequeathed, curiously enough, to their descendants, has not yet died out in the North of England. If any of my readers are folk lore collectors, they will divine my feelings on discovering in one of our northern capitals, among my own personal friends, a family in which, without the excuse of a child to be surprised and pleased, each member duly and deliberately hangs out her stocking on Christmas Eve to receive the kindly gifts of mother and sisters.

But a Christmas in the North would be quite incomplete without a visit from the sword-dancers, and this

may yet be looked for in most of our towns from the Humber to the Cheviot Hills. There are some trifling local variations both in dance and song: the latter has altered with the times; the former is plainly a relic of the war-dances of our Danish and Saxon ancestors. I had an opportunity last spring of making enquiries into the mysteries of sword-dancing from a pitman of Houghton Colliery, Houghton-le-Spring, Joseph Brown by name, and will simply relate what I heard from him on the subject. He was well qualified to speak, having acted as sword-dancer during the past twelve years, in company with eight other men, nine being the number always employed. Five are dancers, one a clothes-carrier, two clowns, and one a fiddler.

There are two sets of verses used near Durham, termed the old and new styles. The old verses are certainly of the date of a hundred years back; they were always used till about ten years ago, and are still sung in turn with the modern ones. They are as follows:—

*First Clown:* It's a ramblin' here I've ta'en
The country for to see,
Five actors I have brought,
Yet better cannot be.

Now, my actors they are young,
And they've ne'er been out before,
But they 'll do the best they can,
And the best can do no more.

Now the first that I call on
Is George, our noble king;
Long time he 's been at wars,
Good tidings back he 'll bring.

One of the sword-dancers here steps from the ring, in which all had been standing, and follows the first clown, holding his sword upright as he walks round the outside of the ring; and the first clown then sings:

The next that I call on,
He is a squire's son,
He 's like to lose his love,
Because he is too young.

The squire's son steps forward and follows King George, and the first clown sings:

Little Foxey is the next,
With the orange and the blue,
And the debts he has paid off,
Both French and Spaniards too.

Little Foxey steps forward and follows the squire's son, and the clown sings:

Now the next that I call on
Is the King of Sicily;
My daughter he shall have,
And married they shall be.

The King of Sicily steps forward and follows Little Foxey, and the clown sings:

Now the next that I call on,
He is a pitman bold;
He works all underground,
To keep him from the cold.

The pitman follows the rest, and the clown sings again:

It 's now you 've seen them all,
Think o' them what ye will,
Though we 'll stand back awhile
Till they do try their skill.

Now fiddler then, take up thy fiddle,
Play the lads their hearts' desire,
Or else we 'll break thy fiddle,
And fling thee a' back o' the fire.

The five men then commence dancing round, with their swords all raised to the centre of the ring, till the first clown orders them to tie the points of their swords

in 'the knot.' When this is done, and the five swords are knotted, the knot is held upright by one of the dancers, whom they call Alexander, or Alick. Alick then takes his sword from the knot, and retaining it, gives the second dancer his sword; then the second dancer gives the third dancer his sword, the third dancer gives it to the fourth, and the fourth to the fifth.

The first clown, called the Tommy, is dressed in a chintz dress with a belt, a fox's head for a cap, and the skin hanging below his shoulders.

The second clown, called the Bessy, wears a woman's gown, which of late years has been well crinolined, and a beaver hat.

The five dancers have black breeches, with red stripes at the sides, white shirts decked with gay ribbons, and hats surmounted with streamers.

The verses given by Sir Cuthbert Sharpe, in the 'Bishoprick Garland,' differ widely from both the old and new style of Durham verses. Probably his may be in use in Newcastle or Sunderland, for two of his characters are a sailor and a skipper.

The dance corresponds most remarkably with the account given by Olaus Magnus of the sword-dance of the ancient Goths and Swedes.[1] Some such dance is still kept up in Gothland, with an allusion to the sacrifice to Odin, which formerly accompanied it. One of the company is clad in skin, and holds a wisp of straw in his mouth, cut sharp at the ends, to resemble a swine's bristles, and thus he personates the hog formerly sacrificed at Yule. Throughout Yorkshire, and formerly indeed all England over, the Christmas visitants are mummers, disguised in finery of different sorts, with blackened faces or masks, and

[1] Brand's Pop. Ant. vol. i. p. 512.

carrying with them an image of a white horse. This white horse appears at Christmas throughout the North of Germany with the 'Hale Christ,' 'Knecht Rupert,' or 'San Claus,' who brings the good children presents, but punishes the naughty ones.

In the midland counties, people asking for Christmas-boxes on Christmas Eve drag about with them a horse's head and skin. I have seen this myself in the Forest of Dean. Mr. Baring Gould writes on the subject: 'At Wakefield and Stanby the mummers enter a house, and if it be in a foul state they proceed to sweep the hearth, and clean the kitchen-range, humming all the time "mum-m-m." At Horbury they do no sweeping now, though I believe in old times they used to practise it. As far as I can judge, there is generally one man in sailor's dress, the rest being women, or rather men in women's dress, but this is not universal. The Christmas-tup is another amusement. It is distinct from the white horse. I believe that the Christmas mummers represent the yule host, or wild hunt, and that the man of the party is Wodin or Odin. The horse is evidently the white steed, Gleipmir, of the ancient god.'

New Year's Eve is one of the nights on which it is deemed highly unlucky in the Borders to let the fire out, the others being All Hallowe'en, Beltane or Midsummer Eve, and Christmas Eve. It is not easy to repair the mischief if once committed, for no one is willing on the following morning to give his neighbour a light, lest he should thus give away all his good luck for the season. And he who should steal fire unseen from his neighbour's hearth, would fare no better for it, since fire thus taken is not counted holy.

It is curious to compare this statement of Mr. Wilkie with that given by Mr. Kelly respecting the

'holy fires of the Germanic race,' in his 'Indo-European Traditions and Folk Lore' (page 46). Mr. Kelly enumerates the Easter fires with those on St. John's Day, Michaelmas, Martinmas, and Christmas. It will be observed that in Scotland the Easter, Michaelmas, and Martinmas fires disappear, while that of All Hallowe'en takes their place. And while in Scotland all care is taken to preserve the house-fire alight at these hallowed seasons, it has been the usage in Germany, and earlier still throughout all Christendom, to extinguish it, and relight it with holy fire, kindled by the priest with flint and steel in the churchyard.

Empty pockets or an empty cupboard on New Year's Eve portend a year of poverty. The poet Burns makes mention of this in an epistle to Colonel de Payster, from whom he borrowed a small sum at this season:

> To make the old year go out groaning,
> And keep the new year from coming in moaning.

Indeed, in the Borders care is taken that no one enters a house empty-handed on New Year's Day. A visitor will be doubly welcome if he carries in a hot stoup or 'plotie.' Everybody should wear a new dress on New Year's Day, and if its pockets contain money of every description, they will be certain not to be empty throughout the year. The last glass of wine or spirits drained from the last bottle on New Year's Eve or Day is called the 'lucky glass.' It brings good fortune to whoever comes in for it, and if an unmarried person drinks it, he will be the first to marry among the company. You must take note what is the Christian name of the first person you see of the opposite sex on New Year's Day: it will be that of the future husband or wife.

On New Year's Day much importance is attached to

the first foot which crosses the threshold. That of a fair man is luckier than of a dark one, but (alas for the chivalry of the North!) should it be a woman's, some misfortune may certainly be looked for. The servant-girls are desirous that their 'first-foot' should be a lover, and sometimes they ensure it by admitting him as soon as the New Year is rung in. They arrange, too, that he should bring something with him into the house, for, as the Lincolnshire rhyme runs:—

Take out, and then take in,
Bad luck will begin;
Take in, then take out,
Good luck comes about.

A friend tells me, that in the western part of the county of Durham he has known a man to be specially retained as 'first-foot,' his guerdon being a glass of spirits, but it was not necessary that he should be a bachelor. The man took care to be at the house by 5 o'clock in the morning, which ensured his being the earliest visitor. This custom prevails through all our northern counties. At Stamfordham, in Northumberland, the first-foot must be a bachelor. He generally brings in a shovelful of coals, but, unfortunately, whisky is coming into fashion as his offering. One inhabitant of the village, I scarcely know why, was considered a lucky 'first-foot,' and he always went in that capacity to the blacksmith's house hard by. One year some one else was, by accident, first-foot. This was considered an ill omen, and accordingly, during the following hay-harvest, the house was broken open and half-a-sovereign stolen.[1]

[1] This holds good of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Doors are there chained up to prevent females from entering. A man in the town comes early to —— Parsonage, and bids the maids unbar and let him in, as he brings the new year to them.

It is recorded by Hospinian that formerly, in Rome, no one would suffer another to take fire out of his house on New Year's Day, or anything made of iron, or indeed would lend anything.[1] But I can bear witness that this idea has been more thoroughly worked out in the farmhouses of this county. It happened that, when a boy, I spent Christmas in one of those primitive secluded spots, which now, alas! have disappeared before the collieries which crowd and darken the land. I remember accompanying the mistress of the house to her kitchen on New Year's Eve, when she called together all her servants, and warned them, under pain of dismissal, not to allow anything to be carried out of the house on the following day, though they might bring in as much as they pleased. Acting on this order, all ashes, dish-washings, or potato-parings, and so forth, were retained in the house till the next day; while coals, potatoes, firewood, and bread were brought in as usual, the mistress keeping a sharp look-out on the fulfilment of her orders.

Now, we may see in this practice on the first day of the year, a shadow of anxiety that the incomings of the ensuing twelvemonth should exceed the outgoings, or in other words that the year might be prosperous. Much of our folk lore points to this craving for material prosperity: *e.g.*, the keeping the tip of a dried tongue in the pocket, that it may never be empty; or turning the money in it on the first sight of the New Moon, or on first hearing the note of the cuckoo, to ensure there being always plenty there — practices still common among us.[2]

[1] Brand's Pop. Ant. vol. i. p. 13.

[2] In Sweden, if a grain of corn be found under the table when sweeping on a New Year's morn, there will be an abundant crop that year.

The Cleveland New Year's greeting is very definite on this matter:—

I wish you a merry Christmas,
And a happy New Year,
A pantry full of roast beef,
And a barrel full of beer.

You may constantly hear the lads of that district calling it through their neighbours' keyholes early on New Year's morning. It is also recited by the children of the West Riding, when they make their rounds soliciting New Year's gifts.

Old people are careful to note how the wind blows on New Year's Eve, as they think it significant of the weather during the following season, according to the old rhymes:—

If New Year's Eve night wind blow south,
It betokeneth warmth and growth;
If west, much milk, and fish in the sea;
If north, much cold and storms there will be;
If east, the trees will bear much fruit;
If north-east, flee it, man and brute.

Perhaps I may mention here two other weather prophecies. It is well known that 'a green yule makes a fat kirk-yard,' but the following couplet is of narrower circulation. It was communicated to me by a friend, who assures me that it is current in Buckinghamshire:—

If the calends of January be smiling and gay,
You 'll have wintry weather till the calends of May.

It is curious to find that the word 'calends' still lives on the lips of the English peasantry. What idea it conveys to their minds I will not enquire. There is an old rhyme yet current which avers:

If the sun shine out of Candlemas-day, of all days in the year,
The shepherd had rather see his wife on the bier;

which corresponds with the Latin proverb —

Si sol splendescat Maria purificante,
Major erit glacies post festum quàm fuit ante.

The oak and ash, both sacred trees, and the ash in particular, the cloud-tree of the Norsemen, with sacred fountains springing from every root, supply a weather prophecy to this day. If the oak comes into leaf before the ash, expect a fine summer; if the ash is first, a wet one; or, as it runs in verse:

If the oak 's before the ash,
You will only get a splash;
If the ash precede the oak,
You will surely have a soak.

It is customary in Scotland for children to go to the neighbouring houses on New Year's Day, singing this verse:

Rise, good wives, and shake your feathers,
And dinna think that we are beggars;
We 're but bairns come out to play,
Rise up and gie 's your hogmaney.

Oat-cakes are given to them, on which they sing:

We joyful wish you a good day,
And thank ye for your hogmaney.

Now here we come upon a custom of great antiquity, and very widely spread, if, as Mr. Ingledew informs us in his 'Ballads and Songs of Yorkshire,' Hagmena songs were formerly sung throughout England, Scotland, and France. He gives a fragment of that in use at Richmond, in Yorkshire:

To-night it is the New Year's night, to-morrow is the day,
And we are come for our right and for our ray,
As we used to do in old King Henry's day.
Sing, fellows, sing Hagman heigh!

If you go to the bacon-flitch, cut me a good bit,
Cut, cut and low, beware of your man;
Cut, and cut round, beware of your thumb,
That I and my merry men may have some.
Sing, fellows, sing Hagman heigh!

If you go to the black ark, bring me ten mark,
Ten mark, ten pound, throw it down upon the ground,
That I and my merry men may have some.
Sing, fellows, sing Hagman heigh!

The dole of cakes causes New Year's Day to be called 'cake day' on the Scottish borders, and the following Monday is known as Hansel Monday, because of the presents of money made on that day, and placed in the receiver's hands. It is named in the old formula of good wishes, 'A happy New Year and a merry Hansel Monday.' Scholars commonly give a hansel to their master or mistress on this day. The boy who gives the largest sum is called the King, and the girl the Queen, and the King claims the right of demanding at least that day as a holiday.

Shrove Tuesday, like Lent, passes unnoticed in Scotland. In the villages of the West Riding, the streets may be seen on this day full of grown-up men and women, playing 'battledore and shuttle feathers.'

The use of palms on Palm Sunday has, I fear, passed away, except among Roman Catholics. The late Mr. Denham, however, in one of his tracts, printed in 1858, speaks of palm-crosses as relics still often to be seen in the hands of north-country children on Palm Sunday, and on cottage-walls through the rest of the year. And he quotes the proverb as still in use, 'He that hath not a palm in his hand on Palm Sunday must have his hand cut off.' The Rev. G. Ornsby also tells me that when he was a child palm-crosses were

always made for Palm Sunday, by the people in the Vale of Lanchester. The substitute for palm was the willow with its early catkins, which formed the extremities of the arms of the cross; they were tied together with blue or pink ribbon, disposed with bows here and there, and were often very tasteful and pretty. And I can myself bear witness to their constant use in the city of Durham, about forty years ago. Many a time have I, when a boy, walked with my comrades to the river-bank, near Kepier Hospital, to gather palms; and many a cross have I made of them for Palm Sunday. We formed them like a St. Andrew's Cross, with a tuft of catkins at each point, and bound them up with knots and bows of ribbon. In Yorkshire, children mark the day differently; they get 'pawne bottles,' *i. e.* bottles containing a little sugar, and betake themselves to the springs and wells, to fill their bottles, and suck at them all the afternoon.

To pass on to Good Friday. The Incumbent of Fishlake, a village in the south-east of Yorkshire, tells me that in that place, on Good Friday morning, at eight o'clock, instead of the usual bell being rung as on Sundays and other holydays, to give notice of Morning Service, the great bell of the church is solemnly tolled as for a death or funeral. This custom is very beautiful and suggestive, but I do not remember to have heard of it elsewhere. A friend who passed his boyhood in the north of Durham informs me that no blacksmith throughout that district would then drive a nail on that day; a remembrance of the awful purpose for which hammer and nails were used on the first Good Friday doubtless held them back.

I learn from a clergyman familiar with the North Riding of Yorkshire, that great care is there taken not

to disturb the earth in any way; it were impious to use spade, plough, or harrow. He remembers, when a boy, hearing of a villager, Charlie Marston by name, who shocked his neighbours by planting potatoes on Good Friday, but they never came up.

The popular feeling in Devonshire is very different. The poor there like to plant crops on Good Friday, especially to sow peas, saying they are sure to grow 'goody,' and it is thought a very lucky day for grafting. A distinctive observance of Good Friday seems, however, to have once prevailed in that county, and so singular a one, that I trust its mention may not be deemed irrelevant. The rector of a country parish about fourteen miles from Exeter was startled one day by this enquiry, from a Sunday scholar, 'Please, Sir, why do people break clomb (*i.e.* crockery) on Good Friday?' The question was rather puzzling to the rector, but he was a good deal struck by hearing afterwards that it is the custom in the island of Corfu, for the inhabitants on that day to fling potsherds down a steep rock, uttering imprecations on the traitor Judas.

An old woman of the North Riding once asked a friend of mine whether it was wrong to wash on Good Friday. 'I used to do so,' she said, 'and thought no harm of it, till once, when I was hanging out my clothes, a young woman passed by (a dressmaker she was, and a Methodist); and she reproved me, and told me this story. While our Lord Jesus was being led to Calvary, they took him past a woman who was washing, and the woman "blirted" the thing she was washing in His face; on which He said, "Cursed be every one who hereafter shall wash on this day!" And never again,' added the old woman, 'have I washed on Good Friday.'

Now it is said, in Cleveland, that clothes washed and

hung out to dry on Good Friday will become spotted with blood; but the Methodist girl's wild legend reminds me more of one which a relation of mine elicited from a poor Devonshire shoemaker. She was remonstrating with him for his indolence and want of spirit, when he astonished her by replying, 'Dont'ee be hard on me. We shoemakers are a poor slobbering race, and so have been ever since the curse that Jesus Christ laid on us.' 'And what was that?' she asked. 'Why,' said he, 'when they were carrying Him to the cross, they passed a shoemaker's bench, and the man looked up and spat at Him; and the Lord turned and said, "A poor slobbering fellow shalt thou be, and all shoemakers after thee,[1] for what thou hast done to Me."'

All England over it is commonly said that one must put on something new on Easter Sunday, else the birds will spoil one's clothes, or, as it stands in verse—

> At Easter let your clothes be new,
> Or else, be sure, you will it rue.

The belief that the sun dances at its rising on Easter morning peeps out in many parts of Yorkshire, as well as in Durham and Northumberland. Here, again, there is a singular correspondence between the folk lore of the North and the West. Devonshire maidens get up to see the sun rise on Easter morning, as duly as do their northern sisters, though what they look for is the Lamb and flag in the centre of the sun's disc. Poor women in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor have told me that they used, as girls, to go out in parties at sunrise to see the

[1] This curse is suggested, I presume, by the legend of the Wandering Jew, Cartaphilus or Ahasuerus, whichever was his name, having been a shoemaker, and cursed, it is said, by Our Lord, for refusing to allow Him to rest on the doorstep of his shop.—S. B. G.

Lamb in the sun, and look at it through a darkened glass, and some always declared they saw it.

As to Easter eggs, they are as duly painted and gilded and rolled on the greensward, throughout the North of England, as they are in Russia or Germany. I am told, however, that the West Riding forms an exception; pasch eggs are unknown there. Another Eastern custom, and one, perhaps, better honoured in the breach than the observance, came before me this year. In a Sunday-school at Durham, a scanty attendance of girls on Easter Day, was accounted for by their being 'terrified' lest the boys should pull off their shoes. 'To-morrow,' it was added, 'they may pull off the boys' caps.' This frolic, whatever be its origin, seems to have extended into Yorkshire. At least, a friend tells me that she remembers, when a little girl, having her shoes pulled off one Easter on the sands at Redcar; and I have heard of a stout-hearted Yorkshire curate, who used to go round his parish on Easter Sunday afternoon, to collect the girls, and pioneer them safely to church and school. That was the time of danger, for the young men had no right to take their shoes till after Morning Service. I may add that in the West Riding 'luking' (playing at knurr and spill) begins at Easter.[1]

[1] In Lancashire, it is customary for the lasses on Easter Monday to 'heave' the lads, *i.e.*, to lift them up from the ground in their arms. On Tuesday the lads heave the lasses.

A friend of mine, a native of Warrington, tells me that Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools took it into his head to visit Warrington on Monday in Easter week. The lasses, seeing a timorous spectacled parson walking down the street, with one accord heaved him, and carried him in their arms through the town. My informant declares that the terror and agony of the poor Inspector were something awful. The more he struggled the closer he was hugged, while an occasional smack from the lips of a vigorous mill-girl blanched his cheek, and made his rumpled hair stand on end. He firmly believed that his character and position were

Before passing on from Easter observances, let me mention one old custom still kept up at University College, Oxford, the most ancient college, I believe, in the University. A block, in the form of a long wooden pole decorated with flowers and evergreens, is placed outside the door of the Hall, leaning against the wall of the buttery which is opposite. After dinner on Easter Day, the cook and his attendant, dressed in white paper caps and white jackets, take their stand on either side of the block, each bearing a pewter dish, one supporting a blunt chopping-axe from the kitchen, the other in readiness for the fees expected on the occasion. As the members of the college come out of the hall—first the master, then the fellows, and so on—each takes the axe, strikes the block with it, and then places in the proper dish the usual fee to the cook. This rite is called 'chipping the block;' its origin is unexplained. The tradition among the undergraduates is, that anyone who can chip the block in two (under the circumstances a physical impossibility), can lay claim to all the college estates, but the master and fellows dispute this.

Ascension Day appears unmarked in the North by any peculiar observances. I only learn that near York it was the custom, twenty years ago, for children to lay rushes or 'seggs' on their doorsteps to mark the festival. The Rev. G. Ornsby suggests that this has probably arisen from the streets having been thus strewn before the procession on this festival in pre-Reformation times. He was once at Cologne on Ascension Day, and witnessed

irretrievably ruined. On another Easter Monday, one of my friends was lifted and kissed till he was black in the face, by a party of leather-breeched coalpit women, at, I think, Wednesbury. The same custom prevails in the Pyrenees, where I have been lifted by a party of stout Basque damsels.—S. B. G.

a most imposing procession, and the streets were all strewn previously with short twigs of fir-branches and other green things.

But our most characteristic festive rejoicings accompany the harvest—the mell-supper and the kern-baby, usages which are by no means extinct among us. In the northern part of Northumberland, the festival takes place at the end of the reaping, not of the ingathering; and an essay written, about the year 1750, by the unhappy Eugene Aram, states that such was also the case in Yorkshire. When the sickle is laid down, and the last sheaf of golden corn set on end, it is said that they have 'got the kern.' The reapers announce the fact by loud shouting, and an image is at once hoisted on a pole, and given into the charge of the tallest and strongest man of the party. The image is crowned with wheat ears and dressed up in gay finery, a white frock and coloured ribbons being its conventional attire. The whole group circle round this harvest-queen, or kern-baby, curtseying to her, and dancing and singing; and thus they proceed to the farmer's barn, where they set the image up on high, as the presiding goddess of their revels, and proceed to do justice to the harvest-supper.

Nor is this all. Each cottage must at harvest-time have its own household divinity, and oaten cakes having formerly been the staple food of the North, these figures are commonly formed of oats. Such have I repeatedly seen in cottages on the Tweed side, elaborately decorated and enshrined at the top of the bink or dresser, with the family stock of big dishes ranged on either side. These, too, are kern-babies. There has been some controversy as to the derivation of the word 'kern.' To me it clearly seems to mean corn. I may mention, in support of this opinion, that in Cornwall an ill-saved harvest is said to

be 'ill kerned,' and that throughout Devonshire the forming of the grain in the ear is called the 'kerning' or 'corning.'

The mell-supper takes its name from the Norse 'mele,' corn. In Icelandic, 'melr' is the Psamma-arenario, the wild corn of the sand-flats: melr also signifies sandy land. Both are derived from the same root, which means to grind to dust. It has come to be applied to corn because it can be made into meal—to sand, because it is pounded stone. As kept up till lately in my own county, the mell-supper is closely akin to the Northumbrian kern-feast. I am not too old to have taken part in more than one of them, and most thoroughly did I enjoy them. My recollection of a mell-doll is of a corn-sheaf stuck with flowers, and wrapped in such of the reapers' garments as could be spared. This, too, was carried to the scene of the harvest-supper amid music and dancing, and then master and servants sat down together to feast, on terms of perfect equality.

This feature of harvest festivities is common to all the northern districts, and springs from a grateful sense of the reaper's services at a peculiarly anxious time; but one part of the entertainment I connect especially with my own county. I well remember, not far from its cathedral town, helping to dress some young men who were to play the part of 'guisers,' and force their entrance into a mell-supper. Disguised they most effectually were—covered with masks, or blackened with burnt cork past all recognition, and their dress the gayest motley imaginable. In apprehension of such invaders, the doors and windows of the barn or dancing-room were barricaded, and the whole building placed in a state of defence; but, whether through treachery within-doors, or their own unassisted valour,

the guisers did at last effect an entrance, and claimed the privilege of conquerors.

Such scenes I often witnessed in my young days, and such I believe still to be enacted in many north-country farmhouses; but who among the groups that dance before the kern-baby, deem that they are treading in the steps of their old British ancestors, as, taught by their Roman conquerors, they danced and bowed before the goddess Ceres? Or, again, of those who at a later period in history paid the same votive honours to the Virgin Mary? Or who, as they sit at the mell-supper, master and servant on equal terms, imagine that their festival had its origin, it may be, in the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles—it may be, in the Roman Saturnalia? 'Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.'[1]

A friend from Yorkshire tells me that the mell-doll is now unknown in the north of that county, but with mell-suppers and guisers he is quite familiar. The Yorkshire custom is, that when in any farm the harvest is won, one of the reapers should mount a wall or bank, and proclaim as follows:

> Blest be the day when Christ was born,
> We 've getten mell of (—'s) corn,
> Weel bun and better shorn.
> Huzza! huzza! huzza!

—everyone then joining in the general cheer.[2]

[1] Deut. xvi. 13, 14.

[2] Through Devonshire the reapers leave a bunch of corn, which they call a neck, to be afterwards tied up with ribbons and flowers, and hung in the barn. And they approach it, saying, as they cut each line of corn,

In Cleveland, the mell-supper is still kept up, though with less ceremony than formerly. 'Guising' was practised there thirty years ago, but is now discontinued. On forking the last sheaf in the harvest-field they shout in chorus:

Weel bun and better shorn,
Is Master (—'s) corn;
We hev her, we hev her,
As fast as a feather.
Hip, hip, hurrah!

In the neighbourhood of Fishlake, in the West Riding, neither mell-doll nor mell-supper now prevail.

Among minor festivals, St. Agnes' Day is marked in our northern counties by a superstitious observance of its own, called St. Agnes' Fast, the same which has furnished Keats with a subject for his little poem, 'The Eve of St. Agnes.' He recounts, in his own glowing yet chastened style, how all the wintry day Madeline's heart had brooded

On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

'Wee day, wee day!' When the neck is cut, there is shouting and halloing, and the reapers call out—

We have ploughed, we have sowed,
We have reaped, we have mowed,
We have brought home every load,
With a Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!

Compare with these harvest customs those of Schaumburg-Lippe. When barley was cut there a tuft was left called 'Waul roggen.' In this was placed a stick adorned with flowers, called the 'Waul staff;' and then the reapers bowed to it with hats off, shouting together thrice, 'Waul, waul, waul!' Waul is a corruption of waud-wod, that is to say, Wustan or Woden. In like manner is *d* changed into *l* in the two German dialects—as, for instance, *melecin* for *medecin*. The Greek δάκρυ = lacrima, the Sanskrit *madhu*, in Latin is *mel*. Wee-day is also a corruption of Wustan or Woden.—S. B. G.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft advisings from their loves receive,
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require,
Of Heaven, with upward eyes, for all that they desire.

St. Agnes' Fast is thus practised throughout Durham and Yorkshire. Two young girls, each desirous to dream about their future husbands, must abstain through the whole of St. Agnes' Eve from eating, drinking, or speaking, and must avoid even touching their lips with their fingers. At night they are to make together their 'dumb cake,' so called from the rigid silence which attends its manufacture. Its ingredients (flour, salt, water, &c.) must be supplied in equal proportions by their friends, who must also take equal shares in the baking and turning of the cake, and in drawing it out of the oven. The mystic viand must next be divided into two equal portions, and each girl, taking her share, is to carry it upstairs, walking backwards all the time, and finally eat it and jump into bed. A damsel who duly fulfils all these conditions, and has also kept her thoughts all the day fixed on her ideal of a husband, may confidently expect to see her future partner in her dreams.

The prescribed formula is somewhat different in Northumberland. There a number of girls, after a day's silence and fasting, will boil eggs, one apiece, extract the yolk, fill the cavity with salt, and eat the egg, shell and all, and then walk backwards, uttering this invocation to the saint:

Sweet St. Agnes, work thy fast,
If ever I be to marry man,
Or man be to marry me,
I hope him this night to see.

Or,

Fair St. Agnes, play thy part,
And send to me my own sweetheart,
Not in his best or worst array,
But in the clothes of every day,
That to-morrow I may him ken,
From among all other men.

A raw red herring, swallowed bones and all, is said to be equally efficacious, and doubtless is very provocative of dreams and visions. Northumbrian swains sometimes adopt this plan to get a glimpse of their future wives.

A Yorkshire friend mentions another way in which St. Agnes' Fast might be broken, and the success of the charm utterly ruined—that is, by a kiss; and it was a constant trick of the young wags to come unawares upon a girl who was believed to be keeping St. Agnes' Fast, and break her fast by a salute.

We learn from the Wilkie MS. that the Second of April shares on the Borders the character which the First bears all England over. There are two April-fool days there, or, as they call them, 'gowk days.' Unsuspecting people are then sent on bootless errands, and ridiculed for their pains. One such day has, I believe, always sufficed us in England. To the full observance of this day in my native city, at the time of my boyhood, I can bear witness; having been duly sent, with many another urchin, to the chemist for a pennyworth of oil of hazel, and received it in another way than I looked for, from the stout hazel-stick hidden behind the shopman's counter. Sometimes the victim is instructed

to ask for 'strap oil.' This custom extends to Germany: in Berlin 'crab's blood' or 'gnat's fat' are the articles sent for.

But 'hunting the gowk' is more fully carried out by sending the victim from place to place with a letter, in which the following couplet was written:

The first and second of Aprile,
Hound the gowk another mile.

I need hardly add that gowk is a local name for the cuckoo, of which bird our ancestors said:

In April
He opes his bill.

Now, according to White of Selborne, the 7th of April is the earliest day for hearing the cuckoo, the 26th the latest. Therefore, before the change of style, the 1st and 2nd of the month, now the 12th and 13th, were days on which it would probably be heard for the first time. In Sussex, April 14 is called 'first cuckoo day.' Verses about this bird abound through our whole island, and many portents are drawn from it. In many places children say:

Cuckoo, cherry tree,
Good bird, tell me
How many years before I dee?

and listen for an answer in the repetitions of the bird's cry. In Sweden the question is, 'In how many years shall I be married?' It is considered lucky in Scotland to be walking when one first hears the cuckoo:

*Gang* and hear the gowk yell,
*Sit* and see the swallow flee,
See the foal before its mother's 'ee,
'T will a thriving year wi' thee.

But it is unlucky to have no money in your pocket, and

you must without fail turn the money when you hear the bird for the first time in the season.

St. Valentine's Eve has an observance of its own in the South of Scotland. The young people assemble and write the names of their acquaintances on slips of paper, placing those of the lads and lassies in separate bags apart. The maidens draw from the former, the young men from the latter, three times in succession, returning the names after the first and second times of drawing. If one person takes out the same name three times consecutively, it is without fail that of the future husband or wife. Thus, in Burns' song of Tam Glen, the maiden sings:

> Yestreen at the Valentine dealing,
> My heart to my mou gi'ed a sten,
> For thrice I drew ane without failing,
> An' thrice it was written, Tam Glen.

In a Buckinghamshire village, to the present day, a young person will address the first person he or she meets of the opposite sex with these words:

> Good morrow to you, Valentine,
> First 'tis yours and then 'tis mine,
> I'll thank you for a Valentine.

Old people presage the weather of the coming season by that of the last three days of March, which they call the 'borrowing days,' and thus rhyme about:

> March borrowed from April
> Three days, and they were ill;
> The first o' them war wind an' weet,
> The next o' them war snaw an' sleet,
> The last o' them war wind an' rain,
> Which gaed the silly pair ewes come toddling hame.

Brand[1] gives the verses somewhat differently:

[1] Pop. Ant. vol. ii. p. 42.

March said to Aperill,
I see three hogs upon a hill;
But lend your first three days to me,
And I'll be bound to gar them dee.
The first it sall be wind an' weet,
The next it sall be snaw an' sleet,
The third it sall be sic a freeze,
Sall gar the birds stick to the trees.
But when the borrowed days were gane,
The three silly hogs came hirplin' hame.

It is curious that in the country parts of Devonshire the same three days are called 'blind days,' and considered unlucky for sowing any kind of seed. And it is yet more remarkable that the Highlanders have their borrowed or borrowing days, but with them February borrows from January, and bribes him with three young sheep. These first three days of February, or Faiolteach, by Highland reckoning (that is, old style), occur between February 11 and 15. And it is accounted a most favourable prognostic for the ensuing year that they should be stormy and cold.[1] Can it be that this belief has any connection with the three cold days in February, mentioned by Humboldt, in his 'Cosmos,' as confirmatory of his theory respecting the November stream of aërolites?

The 29th of May is marked in Fishlake and its neighbourhood as the close of the birds'-nesting season. The boys think it unlucky to take nests later, and religiously abstain from doing so.

There is an old saying in the North about St. Michael's Day: 'So many days old the moon is on Michaelmas Day, so many floods after.' I am not aware that the Irish custom of abstaining from blackberries after this day extends to the North of England, but I have

[1] See Mrs. Grant's 'Superstitions of the Highlanders,' vol. ii. p. 217.

come across it in Devonshire. The saying in Ireland is this: 'At Michaelmas the devil puts his foot on the blackberries.' In Yorkshire, this festival is called 'hipping day,' from its connection with a confection of hips, the red berries of the wild rose.

How All-Hallowe'en is kept in Scotland, English readers well know from Burns' poem on the subject. It is an evening of mirth and hilarity, and many divinations into futurity take place during its mystic hours. The Wilkie MS. mentions some of these which are not named by Burns, but as they may also be practised on the eves of Christmas, New Year's Day, and Midsummer Day, they will be more properly ranged under the head of 'Divinations into Futurity.' Ordeal by fire and water are, however, peculiarly Hallowe'en sports. The latter consists in ducking for an apple in a tub of water with the mouth, the hands being clasped behind the back: In the former, a small rod of wood is suspended from the ceiling, with a lighted candle fixed at one end, and an apple at the other. The stick is twirled round, and the company in turn try to catch the apple in their teeth, at the moment it passes before them. These sports are still practised in the neighbourhood of Durham.

Another fiery ordeal consists in whirling before the face a lighted brand, singing the old verse,—

> Dingle, dingle, dowsie, the cat 's in the well;
> The dog 's awa' to Berwick, to buy a new bell.

They then observe the last sparks of fire, and augur from them: many round spots mean money, a quick extinction loss of property, and so on.[1]

[1] On the 5th of November, parkin, a sort of pepper-cake made with treacle and ginger, is found in every house in the West Riding. As,

St. Clement's Day was formerly observed, in the North of England, by men going about to ask for drink, that they might make merry in the evening. In Staffordshire the boys now go from house to house on that day, but they only ask for apples, which are generally given them.

At the risk of being deemed discursive, I cannot refrain from mentioning a Buckinghamshire custom, communicated to me by a friend. It was once universal among the lacemakers of that county, but is fast becoming obsolete. St. Andrew is there considered the patron saint of lacemaking, possibly because the intersecting threads in their delicate fabric so frequently form his cross; at any rate, his day is kept as a festival by all who practise that handicraft. The cakes made in honour of it are called 'T'andry cakes,' a curious corruption of St. Andrew. Though this saint be the patron of Scotland, his day is now little heeded there. It was formerly kept by repasts of sheeps' heads, the old national dish, and the day was called Andermes.

however, the cake is eaten several days before the 5th, I have no doubt it originally formed part of the All-hallows' feast. The Sunday within the octave of All Saints is called Parkin Sunday.—S. B. G.

## CHAPTER III.

### SPELLS AND DIVINATIONS.

With the Primrose Flower—Three Pails of Water—Holly Leaves—The Sark—The Willow Branch—A New-laid Egg—Wishing Chairs—Ring and Water.

THE Borderland is peculiarly rich in ways and means for getting a peep into futurity, especially as regards the all-important point of the future partner in wedded life. Some of these may be practised at any time, but most are restricted to All-Hallowe'en, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and Beltane or Midsummer Eve.

The following rite seems of the former class. Let a youth or maiden pull from its stalk the flower of the 'horse-knot' or 'primula,' cut the tops of the stamens with a pair of scissors, and lay the flower by in a secret place, where no human eye can see it. Let him think through the day, and dream through the night, of his sweetheart, and then, on looking at it the next day, if he find the stamens shot out to their former height, success will attend him in love; if not, he can only expect disappointment.[1]

The next rite, however, is restricted to the above-named eves. Let a Border maiden take three pails full of

[1] In Berwickshire a similar divination is practised by means of 'kemps,' *i.e.* spikes of the ribwort plantain. Two spikes must be taken in full bloom, and being bereft of every appearance of blow, they are wrapped in a dock-leaf and laid beneath a stone. One represents the lad, the other the lass. If next morning the spikes appear in blossom,

water, and place them on her bedroom floor; then pin to her night-dress, opposite to her heart, three leaves of green holly, and so retire to rest. She will be roused from her first sleep by three yells, as if from the throats of three bears: as these sounds die away, they will be succeeded by as many hoarse laughs, after which the form of her future husband will appear. If he is deeply attached to her, he will change the position of the water-pails; if not, he will pass out of the room without touching them. Tradition tells how, on one occasion, the lover who had been thus invoked, while moving the pails of water, let fall a rope with a noose at the end, which the young woman took up the next morning and laid in her press. She was married soon afterwards to the man whose form she had beheld, but within a fortnight of the marriage, he hung himself with that very rope in a fit of intoxication.

The use of holly in this form of divination recalls a somewhat different use made of it in Northumberland. We hear there of he-holly and she-holly, according as it is with or without prickles, and the leaves of the she-holly are alone deemed proper for divination. These

then there will be 'aye love between them twae.' The same rite has been practised in Northamptonshire. Witness the following lines from Clare's 'Shepherd's Calendar':—

> Or, trying simple charms and spells,
> Which rural superstition tells,
> They pull the little blossom threads
> From out the knotweed's button heads,
> And put the husk, with many a smile,
> In their white bosoms for a while.
> Then, if they guess aright the swain
> Their love's sweet fancies try to gain,
> 'Tis said that ere it lies an hour,
> 'Twill blossom with a second flower,
> And from the bosom's handkerchief
> Bloom, as it ne'er had lost a leaf.

'smooth and unarmed,' leaves, as Southey calls them, must be plucked, late on a Friday, by persons careful to preserve an unbroken silence from the time they go out to the next morning's dawn. The leaves must be collected in a three-cornered handkerchief, and on being brought home, nine of them must be selected, tied with nine knots into the handkerchief, and placed beneath the pillow. Dreams worthy of all credit will attend this rite, though, if the old rhyme be trustworthy, so would be any dream dreamt on that night and repeated the next day; for,—

> A Friday night's dream on a Saturday told,
> Is sure to come true, if it's ever so old.[1]

On Hallowe'en or New Year's Eve a Border maiden may wash her sark, and hang it over a chair to dry, taking care to tell no one what she is about. If she lie awake long enough, she will see the form of her future spouse enter the room and turn the sark. We are told of one young girl, who, after fulfilling this rite, looked out of bed and saw a coffin behind the sark; it remained visible for some time, and then disappeared. The girl rose up in agony, and told her family what had occurred, and the next morning she heard of her lover's death. In another instance the young woman is said to have seen her lover at first, but his image quickly vanished, and was replaced by a coffin; she was shortly afterwards married to the man, but he soon died and left her a widow.

Another mode of divination is by the willow wand. Let a maiden take a willow-branch in her left hand, and, without being observed, slip out of the house and run three times round it, whispering all the time, 'He that's to be my gude man come and grip the end o't.'

[1] Local Historian's Table Book, vol. iii. p. 254.

During the third run, the likeness of her future husband will appear and grasp the other end of the wand. A sword is sometimes used instead of a wand, but, in this case, it must be held in the right hand.

This spell somewhat resembles one by which German girls ascertain the colour of their future husband's hair. They call it hair-snatching, and practise it thus. Between the hours of eleven and twelve at night, on St. Andrew's Eve, a maiden must stand at the house door, take hold of the latch, and say three times, 'Gentle love, if thou lovest me, show thyself.' She must then quickly open the door wide enough to put out her hand, and make a rapid grasp out in the dark, and she will find in her hand a lock of her future husband's hair.[1] Belgian girls, who desire to see their husbands in a dream, lay their garters crosswise at the foot of the bed, and a looking-glass under their pillow; in this glass the image of their future husband will appear.[2]

A story is told of a young woman, who, on waking one New Year's morning, found a sword lying at her bedside. Imagining that it had been used in the divinations of the previous evening, and carried away from its owner by some spirit who had been too rashly invoked, she took it up, and locked it in her chest. Those who find these swords or divining-rods always do this, lest the spirits make them a means of temptation; at the same time, those who lose them are always restless till they can recover them. The young woman was afterwards married to a gentleman's servant, and in course of time became a mother. One day, soon after her infant's birth, she gave her husband the key of her chest, and begged him to give her some articles of

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 145. [2] Ibid. p. 273.

clothing from it: he opened the chest, beheld the sword, recognised it as his own, seized it, and exclaiming, 'This is my sword which has troubled me so long!' transfixed himself with it on the spot, to the consternation and horror of his poor wife.

A new-laid egg offers another means of diving into futurity. On New Year's Eve, perforate with a pin the small end of the egg, and let three drops of the white fall into a basin of water. They will diffuse themselves on the surface into fantastic shapes of trees, &c. From these the initiated will augur the fortunes of the egg-dropper, the character of his wife, number of his children, and so forth. This is still practised in Denmark, where also, as a variety, the girls will melt lead on New Year's Eve, and, pouring it into water, observe the next morning what form it has assumed. If it resembles a pair of scissors, she will inevitably marry a tailor; if a hammer, her husband will be a smith, and so on.

The maidens in Durham have their own way of testing their lovers' fidelity. They will take an apple-pip, and, naming the lover, put the pip in the fire. If it makes a noise as it bursts with the heat, she is assured of his affection; if it burns away silently, she will be convinced that he has no true regard for her.

As to wishing, we have wishing-chairs here and there through the country. There is one at Finchale Priory, near Durham; and he who seats himself in it, breathes a wish, and tells no one what it is, will receive it. But there is an easier mode of gaining what one desires. If you see a horseshoe, or piece of old iron, on your path, take it up, spit on it, and throw it over your shoulder, framing your wish at the same time; keep the wish secret, and you will have it in time.

In Cleveland, girls will resort to the following way of divining whether they will be married or no. Take a tumbler of 'south running water,' that is, water from a stream which flows southwards; borrow the wedding ring of some gudewife, and suspend it by a hair of one's head over the glass of water, holding the hair between the finger and thumb. If the ring hit against the side of the glass, the holder of it will die an old maid; if it turn quickly round she will be married once—if slowly, twice.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PORTENTS AND AUGURIES.

On the Borders—In Durham—At Leeds—The Spilling of Salt—First Stone taken from a Church—First Corpse laid in a Churchyard—Auguries from Birds—Rooks—Swallows—Robin—Yellow Hammer—Wren—Bat—Raven — Magpie—Gabriel Hounds—Gabble Retchet—Wild Huntsman—Sneezing.

Of portents and auguries we find large mention made in the Wilkie MS. The number of trifling circumstances held to presage good or evil is really astonishing. Thus, it is fortunate for the housewife if a brood of chickens turn out all cock-birds; very fortunate if her cabbages grow double—*i.e.*, with two shoots from one root; or 'lucker,' that is, with the leaves open instead of closing into a 'stock' or heart; fortunate, too, if she meet with potatoes, gooseberries, &c. of an unusual shape, or with peas and beans more than the usual number in the pod. A pod containing only one pea is equally auspicious. A spider descending upon you from the roof is a token that you will soon have a legacy from a friend. Fuller, in his 'Worthies,' refers to this belief: 'When a spider is found upon our clothes, we use to say, some money is coming towards us. The moral is this. Those who imitate the industry of that contemptible creature may, by God's blessing, weave themselves into wealth, and procure themselves a plentiful estate.'

On the other hand, the sudden loss of hair is a prognostic of the loss of children, health, or property. He

who hears a loud stroke upon the table, as if by a wand or club, or three successive strokes, or the noise as of a bullet dropped upon the table, is a doomed man himself, or will soon hear of the death of a friend. Or, again, if a man dream that his teeth fall out, he will hear next day of the death of a friend, while a dream of fire prognosticates sorrow and pain. If you dream of a wedding, you will hear of a death; if you dream of water, you will hear of sickness.

A list of little superstitions of the same kind, still extant in the county of Durham, has been supplied to me by a careful observer.

It is counted lucky there to carry in the pocket a crooked sixpence, or one with a hole in it, or to put a stocking on through inadvertence, inside out. People with meeting eyebrows are thought fortunate fellows.[1] It is lucky to set a hen on an odd number of eggs; set her on even ones, and you will have no chickens. Again, if two persons wash their hands together in the same basin, they will be sure to fall out before bed-time. This is said all England over. If a person's hair burn brightly when thrown into the fire, it is a sign of longevity; the brighter the flame, the longer the life. On the other hand, if it smoulder away, and refuse to burn, it is a sign of approaching death.[2] If the

[1] This is curious, since in Icelandic sagas, a man with meeting eyebrows is said to be *hamrammr*, or a kveldulfr, that is, a werewolf. Thus Olaf Tonnumbruni is spoken of in the Landnama, V. c. 10 as *hamrammr, i.e.*, able to change his shape. His nickname signifies one with drooping brows, but in later Icelandic folk lore, the eyebrows growing over the nose is a token of a man being a werewolf. The same idea holds in Denmark (Thiele Danmarks Folke Sagn, ii. p. 279), also in Germany (Simrock Deutscher Sagen, p. 467), whilst in Greece it is a sign that a man is a Brukolak or Vampire.—S. B. G.

[2] It is deemed a sign of longevity in Devonshire if the hair grows down on the forehead, and retreats up the head above the temples.

nose itches, it is a sign that you will be crossed, or vexed, or kissed by a fool; if the foot, it foretells that you will soon tread on strange ground. Itching of the right hand portends receiving money; of the left hand, paying money; of the ear, hearing sudden news. If the right ear tingles, you are being spoken well of; if the left ear, some one is speaking ill of you. If you shiver, some one is walking over your future grave. If you stumble upstairs (by accident), you will be married the same year; if you snuff out the candle you certainly will. If you sing before breakfast you will cry before supper. If you put a button or hook into the wrong hole while dressing in the morning, some misfortune will occur during the day. A mole at the back of the neck marks out the bearer of it as in danger of hanging.

These are Durham sayings, but many of them are much wider in their range. The same may be said of the following, which were communicated by a friend at Leeds:—

If a snake crosses the path, it will rain.

If glowworms shine at night, it will soon rain.

Spring has not arrived till you can set your foot on twelve daisies.

> March search, April try,
> May will prove if you live or die.

If you take violets or primroses to a house in less quantity than a handful, all the owner's young chickens or ducks will die.

Before you kill anything it is necessary to wash your face.

Eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, and grey peas on Ash-Wednesday, and you will have money in your pocket all the year round.

If you want to have extra good luck to your dairy, give your bunch of mistletoe to the first cow that calves after New Year's Day.

Turn the money in your pocket on the first sight of the New Moon, and you will always have plenty there; or, again, look at the first New Moon of the year through a silk handkerchief which has never been washed. As many moons as you see through the handkerchief (the threads multiplying the vision), so many years will pass ere you are married.

Mr. Denham tells us that he once saw an old matron turn her apron to the New Moon to ensure good luck for the ensuing month. I may, perhaps, mention here, that apples are said to 'shrump up' in Devonshire if picked when the moon is waning.

To return to the Borders. A maiden can scarcely do a worse thing there than boil a dish-clout in her crock. She will be sure, in consequence, to lose all her lovers; or, in Scotch phrase, she would 'boil all her lads awa.'

If, on leaving your house, you see a black snail, seize it boldly by one of its horns and throw it over your left shoulder; you may then go on your way prosperously, but if you fling it over your right shoulder, you will draw down ill luck. This practice extends as far south as Lancashire. In Yorkshire it is unlucky to meet a white horse on leaving home; you must spit to avert misfortune.

Skir or kir-handed people, *i. e.* left-handed ones, are not safe for a traveller to meet on a Tuesday morning. On other days it is fortunate to meet them. Again, if you enter another man's house, with your 'skir' foot foremost, you draw down evil on its inhabitants. If, therefore, you have carelessly done so, you must avert

the mischief by going out, and making your entrance a second time with the right foot foremost. I conclude that this little superstition once held its ground in the South, for Dr. Johnson is said to have entertained it, and to have left a house and re-entered it right foot foremost, if on the first occasion he had planted his left foot on the threshold.

If any person deemed auspicious meet a young tradesman who has just donned his apron, and say to him, 'Weel may ye brook (or dirty) your apron,' the young man will be sure to do well in life.

It is unlucky for a traveller on Monday morning to meet a man with 'schloof,' or flat feet; but mischief may be averted by returning home, eating and drinking, and starting afresh on one's way.

If meat shrinks in the pot, it presages a downfall in life; but if it swells to a large size, the master of the house will be prosperous in his undertakings.

To sweep the dust out of your house by the front door is to sweep away the good fortune of your family: it must be swept inwards, and carried out in a basket or shovel, and then no harm will follow.

It is unlucky, after one has started on a journey, to be recalled and told of something previously forgotten; but the spell may be broken by asking for meat and drink, and partaking of it. This done, the journey may be resumed without fear. This little bit of superstition, too, has crept southwards into England. A clergyman from Yorkshire tells me that his grandfather, though anything but a weak man, would never turn back when he had once started on an expedition: he has been known to stand on horseback at the end of his grounds, shouting to the house for something that he had forgotten, rather than turn back for it.

Thus, in Sweden, one must not turn round when going on any business, for fear it turn out ill, nor may one look back when setting out on a journey.

Akin to this is the belief that it is unlucky to watch anyone out of sight; if you do so you will never see that person again.

Many north-country people would not, on any account, lend another a pin. They will say, 'You may take one, but, mind, I do not give it.' Akin to this is the objection, once universally felt, to giving a knife or other sharp implement; it would cut friendship or love. Thus Gay, in his 'Shepherd's Week:'

> But woe is me! Such presents luckless prove,
> For knives, they tell me, always sever love.

I have heard in Durham of a schoolmaster who wished to reward one of his pupils with a knife, but dared not do so without receiving from the boy a penny, in order that the knife might be purchased, not given. This feeling extends to Denmark, if indeed the Danish settlers did not bring the belief into England.

In the West Riding of Yorkshire it is thought sinful to burn evergreens which have been used for decorations; or, again, to point at the stars, or try to count them. Many, they say, have been struck dead for so doing. I believe that this idea extends to Durham.

No one in the Borders will put on a new coat or dress without placing some money at once in the right-hand pocket. This ensures the pocket being always full; but if, by mistake, it is put in the left-hand pocket, you will never have a penny so long as you wear the coat.

When you see the first lamb in the spring, note whether its head or tail is turned towards you. If

the former, you will have plenty of meat to eat during the year; if the latter, look for nothing beyond milk and vegetables. As far south as Lancashire, it is thought lucky to see the first lamb's head, and unlucky to see its tail.

As to the spilling of salt, it is considered ominous in the North as elsewhere; and he whose misplaced courtesy should lead him to offer to place salt on the plate of a northern, would probably be repelled with the words:

Help me to salt,
Help me to sorrow!

The ill luck may, however, be averted by a second help. It is thought unlucky through the North to turn a loaf upside down, after helping oneself from it. Along the coast, they say, that for every loaf so turned a ship will be wrecked. If a loaf parts in the hand while you are cutting it, it bodes dissension in the family: you part man and wife.

In Aberdeenshire it is believed, that whosoever pulls the first stone out of a church, although it is for a good purpose, and to make way for a new one, will come to a violent end. My informant, a clergyman of the Church in Scotland, knew a case in which no workman had courage to begin, although the new place of worship had been built. The agent of the estate pulled out the first stone, and after that the labourers proceeded without further demur. In the same place there was great difficulty in bringing the new churchyard into use. No one would be the first to bury his dead there, for it was believed that the first corpse laid there was a teind to the Evil One. At last a poor tramp who was found dead in the road was interred, and after this there was no further difficulty. Now, I

have never heard of this superstition except in Devonshire, where I know it to exist. The churchyard round St. John's Church in the parish of Bovey Tracey, South Devon, was long unused, the countrypeople declaring that the devil would seize the first body laid in it. At last a stranger was buried there, the servant of a visitor in the parish, after which interments began at once to take place.[1]

Birds have always supplied numberless auguries. When rooks desert a rookery it foretells the downfall of the family on whose property it is. There is a Northumbrian saying, that the rooks deserted the rookery at Chipchase, when the family of Reed left that place. On the other hand, the Wilkie MS. informs us, that when rooks haunt a town or village, mortality is supposed to await its inhabitants, and if they feed in the streets it shows a storm is near at hand.

The same authority tells us that it is a very good omen for swallows to take possession of a place, and build their nests around it; while it is unpropitious for them to forsake a place which they have once tenanted. Now, the swallow, the herald of spring, has been held a sacred bird by the whole Germanic race: it preserves the house on which it builds from fire and storms, and protects it from evil; while, in its turn, it is protected by the penalties which threaten the sacrilegious hand which should destroy it—the loss of dairy-produce, or

[1] Thus, in Germany, it is said that the first person who enters a new church becomes the property of the devil. At Aix-la-Chapelle is shown a rent in the door, which is thus accounted for. The church was ready for consecration, and before anyone entered it a dog was driven in. The devil in a rage seized the dog, and flew away with it, shivering the door. In various parts of Germany, and in Norway, a dog or a pig was buried in the churchyard as an offering to the devil. He is thus outwitted, and receives a beast instead of a man as his tribute.—S. B. G.

continued rain for four weeks. In Yorkshire the punishment is not so defined, but it is considered certain to fall in one form or other. A farmer's wife near Hull told a friend of mine, Mrs. L., how some young men, sons of a banker in that town, had pulled down all the swallows' nests about a little farm which he possessed. 'The bank broke soon after,' she went on, 'and, poor things, the family have had nought but trouble since!' In Perigord the swallow is the 'messenger of life;' in some parts of France it shares with the wren the title of 'poule de Dieu;' and among our own peasantry, those who say,—

> The robin and the wren,
> Are God Almighty's cock and hen;
> Him that harries their nest,
> Never shall his soul have rest,

add

> The martin and the swallow,
> Are God Almighty's bow and arrow;

or, as it runs in some of our midland counties:—

> The martin and the swallow,
> Are God Almighty's birds to hollow.

Archbishop Whately tells us, however, that in Ireland the swallow is called the 'devil's bird' by the vulgar, who hold that there is a certain hair on every one's head, which if a swallow can pick off, the man is doomed to eternal perdition. In Scotland, on the other hand, the pretty little Yellow Hammer is called the 'devil's bird,' and a superstitious dislike to it extends as far south as Northumberland. My friend the Vicar of Stamfordham tells me that when the boys of his parish find its nest, they destroy it, saying:—

Half a paddock, half a toad,
Half a drop of de'il's blood,
Horrid yellow yowling!

A cock crowing on the threshold, or a humblebee entering a house, are in Buckinghamshire deemed omens of a visitor. To turn the bee out is a most inhospitable action.

As to the robin redbreast, it is invested with a sacred character all Christendom over, though various reasons are assigned for it in different countries. In Brittany it is reverenced for an act of devotion to the Crucified Saviour, in extracting one thorn from His crown, thus dyeing its own breast red; in Wales for daily bearing in its bill one drop of water to the place of torment, in order to extinguish its flames. Boys always respect its nest: they say in Cornwall,—

Who hurts the robin or the wren
Will never prosper, sea or land.

But the penalty attached to such sacrilege in Devonshire is peculiar. A little boy in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor once told me that if you took a robin's nest, all the 'clomb' (*i. e.* crockery) in the house would break.

In Scotland, however, the song of the robin is thought to bode ill to the sick person who hears it, and a similar belief holds in Northamptonshire; where, indeed, the bird is counted a certain prophet of death, and is said to tap three times at the window of a dying person's room. Thus, again, at St. John's College, Hurstpierpoint, the boys maintain that when a death takes place a robin will enter the chapel, light upon the altar, and begin to sing.[1]

[1] Singularly enough, I saw this happen myself on one occasion. I happened to be in the chapel one evening at six o'clock, when a robin

The wren generally shares in the reverence paid to the robin; thus the two birds are named together in the Pastorals of George Smith, A.D. 1770:—

I found a robin's nest within our shed,
And in the barn a wren her young ones bred;
I never take away their nest, nor try
To catch the old ones, lest a friend should die:
Dick took a wren's nest from his cottage side,
And ere a twelvemonth passed his mother died.

Nevertheless, at Christmas-tide, boys are accustomed in Essex to kill wrens and carry them about in furze-bushes, from house to house, asking a present in these words:—

The wren, the wren, the king of the birds,
St. Stephen's Day was killed in the furze;
Although he be little, his honour is great,
And so, good people, pray give us a treat.

It is remarkable that the custom extends to the Isle of Man, where the following verse is used:—

We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
We hunted the wren for Jack of the Can;
We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
We hunted the wren for every one.

And after making a circuit, and collecting what money they can, the boys lay the wren on a bier and bury it. The same usage has prevailed in Ireland and in France; it is a singular one, and has been thus explained. The bird had a sacred character among our Celtic ancestors, as among the Greeks. It was a bearer of celestial fire, and disputed with the eagle the kingship of the feathered creation. Early Christian teachers opposed

entered at the open circular east window in the temporary apse, and lighting on the altar began to chirp. A few minutes later, the passing bell began to toll for a boy who had just died.—S. B. G.

the superstitious respect paid to the little creature, and their lessons were singularly embodied in this cruel persecution.[1]

The bawkie-bird, or bat, immortalised by Shakespear as 'the delicate Ariel's' steed, is in Scotland connected with witchcraft. 'If,' says Mr. Wilkie, 'the bat is observed, while flying, to rise, and then descend again earthwards, you may know that the witches' hour is come—the hour in which they have power over every human being under the sun who is not specially shielded from their influence.'

The raven,[2] crow, and magpie[3] are ominous birds on

[1] See Kelly's Indo-European Tradition, pp. 75—82.

[2] In Sweden, the ravens which scream by night in forest-swamps and wild moors, are held to be the ghosts of murdered men, whose bodies have been hidden in those spots by their undetected murderers, and not had Christian burial. In Denmark, the night raven is considered an exorcised spirit. There is a hole in its left wing, caused by the stake driven into the earth where a spirit has been exorcised. One must take care not to look up when the bird is flying overhead, for he who sees through the hole in its wing will become a night raven himself, and the night raven will be released. It is ever flying towards the east, in hopes of reaching the Holy Sepulchre, for when it arrives there it will get rest. The following Cornish story, however, presents the raven under another aspect, while it exhibits the Cornishman in his least favourable character, —that of a wrecker. A quarryman was working under a large block of stone which was on the point of falling. He was quite unconscious of his danger, but a raven perceived it, and resolved to save him. So the bird picked up a pebble, and dropped it on the miner's head. 'Get along, you foul creature,' cried the man, as he continued his work. Nothing daunted, the raven picked up another stone, and dropped it as before. The fellow swore, but did not move a step. Then the bird flew to the shore, seized a bit of wood from a wreck, and dropped it before the quarryman. 'Halloo!' exclaimed he, 'where that came from there is more to be got!' and flinging away pick and shovel he rushed off to the beach. Down crashed the rock, but, thanks to the raven, the quarryman was safe.—S. B. G.

[3] The magpie is considered in Sweden a downright witches' bird, belonging to the Evil One and the other powers of night. When the witches

the Border, as elsewhere. A north-country servant thus accounted for the unluckiness of the magpie to her master, the Rev. H. Humble. 'It was,' the girl said, 'the only bird which did not go into the Ark with Noah; it liked better to sit outside, jabbering over the drowned world.' Yet, uncanny as the creature is, and mischievous too, there are parts of the Continent where no one dares kill it. An English traveller in Sweden once saw a flock of magpies greedily devouring the pigs' food, and, having a gun with him, offered to shoot some. He did so, and the farmer thanked him heartily, but expressed his hopes that no harm might befal him in consequence.[1]

I received my first lesson respecting the portents to be drawn from magpies very early in life. Well do I remember, when a boy of ten or twelve years old, driving an old lady in a pony-carriage, to visit a friend in a secluded part of the county of Durham. Half our journey was made when, without a word of warning, the reins were suddenly snatched out of my hand, and the pony brought to a stand. Full of astonishment, I looked to my companion for some explanation of this assault on my independence, and saw her gazing with intense interest on a magpie then crossing the road. After a pause of some seconds she exclaimed, with a sigh, 'Oh, the nasty bird! Turn back, turn back!' And back we turned, the old lady instructing me on the way home in the following verse, which certainly justified the course we had taken:

on Walpurgis night ride to the Blakulli, they go in the form of magpies. These birds moult in summer, and become bald about the neck; and then the countrypeople say they have been to the Blakulli and helped the Evil One to get his hay in, and that the yoke has rubbed their feathers off.—(Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 84.)

[1] Abp. Whately's Remains, p. 270.

One is sorrow, two mirth,
Three a wedding, four a birth,
Five heaven, six hell,
Seven the de'il's ain sell.

The first couplet, with some variations, is in universal use; but I think, on the whole, the magpie receives more notice in the North of England than elsewhere. One clerical friend informs me of a lady in Yorkshire, who pleads guilty to making a cross in the air when she sees a magpie crossing her path, by way of dispelling the ill luck attending the bird; and another tells me how he himself invariably takes off his hat on catching sight of a single magpie, in the hope that by this polite attention he may avert the evil consequences attendant on the apparition. I have heard precisely the same thing of a man of education and good position in Yorkshire; and a lady of that county, Mrs. L——, tells me a curious instance of the good effects of attending to the magpie's warning. It relates to a gentleman with whom she was well acquainted, a county magistrate, and a landowner. One day, in the year 1825, he was riding to York with the view of depositing his rents in Chaloner's Bank, when a magpie flew across his path. He drew up his horse, paused a moment, and turned homewards, resolving to defer his journey till the next day. That day, however, the bank failed, and it only remained for the gentleman to congratulate himself on his prudent attention to the magpie's warning.

Now, all this is very curious when viewed in connection with ancient pagan mythology. Auguries drawn from the flight and actions of birds formed a part of its complex system, from the days when Themistocles was assured of victory at Artemisium by the crowing of a cock, or Romulus claimed to be King of Rome from the

appearance of vultures. The Greeks made a science of these auguries and their interpretation, and called it Ornithomancy. Is it not marvellous to find traces of such direct heathenism among even the upper classes of a country Christianised so many ages back? Eleven hundred years ago, efforts were made by doctors of the Church to root them out, but here they are still. We find Alcuin, who was born at York about A.D. 735, the friend of Charlemagne, and one of the glories of Anglo-Saxon times, writing thus to a bishop, evidently a Saxon one: 'Prognostics also, and cries of birds, and sneezings, are altogether to be shunned, because they are of no force except to those who believe in them, so that it may happen unto them according to their faith. For it is permitted to the evil spirit for the deceiving of persons who observe these things, to cause that in some degree prognostics should often foretell the truth.' In another place Alcuin defines augurs as 'those who pay attention to prognostics, and to the flight and voice of birds.'

But to proceed. We can scarcely be surprised that lonely walks among the wild hills and cheerless moors of the North should be attended by superstitious fears, or that the strange unearthly cries, so like the yelping of dogs, uttered by wildfowl on their passage southwards, should engender a belief in a pack of spectral hounds. Wordsworth speaks of it in a sonnet, evidently connecting it with the German legend of the Wild Huntsman. He tells of a peasant, poor and aged, yet endowed

> With ample sovereignty of eye and ear;
> Rich were his walks with supernatural cheer:
> He the seven birds hath seen that never part,
> Seen the seven whistlers on their nightly rounds,

> And ccunted them! And oftentimes will start,
> For overhead are sweeping Gabriel's hounds,
> Doomed with their impious lord the flying hart
> To chase for ever on aërial grounds.

In Devonshire the spectral pack is called the 'Wisht hounds,' a name which Mr. Kelly derives from Wodin's name, Wunsch, corrupted into 'wisht.' It has a huntsman there who guides his pack over the wild wastes of Dartmoor; but I cannot hear of such a being in my own neighbourhood. The Gabriel hounds, as they call them in Durham and some parts of Yorkshire, are described as monstrous human-headed dogs, who traverse the air, and are often heard though seldom seen. Sometimes they appear to hang over a house, and then death or calamity are sure to visit it. A Yorkshire friend informs me that when a child was burned to death in Sheffield, a few years ago, the neighbours immediately called to mind how the Gabriel hounds had passed above the house not long before. From another quarter I hear of a person who was hastily summoned one night to the sick-bed of a relative whose illness had suddenly assumed an alarming character. As he set out he heard the wild sound of the creatures above his head; they accompanied him the whole way, about a mile, then paused and yelped loudly over the house. He entered it, and found that the patient had just breathed her last.

In a letter from the late Mr. Holland, of Sheffield, dated March 28, 1861, is the following mention of this wild hunt, with a sonnet by him, embodying local feelings on the subject: 'I can never forget the impression made upon my own mind, when once arrested by the cry of these Gabriel hounds as I passed the parish church of Sheffield, one densely dark and very still

night. The sound was exactly like the questing of a dozen beagles on the foot of a race, but not so loud, and highly suggestive of ideas of the supernatural.

'Oft have I heard my honoured mother say,
How she has listened to the Gabriel hounds—
Those strange unearthly and mysterious sounds,
Which on the ear through murkiest darkness fell;
And how, entranced by superstitious spell,
The trembling villager not seldom heard,
In the quaint notes of the nocturnal bird,
Of death premonished, some sick neighbour's knell.
I, too, remember once at midnight dark,
How these sky-yelpers startled me, and stirred
My fancy so, I could have then averred
A mimic pack of beagles low did bark.
Nor wondered I that rustic fear should trace
A spectral huntsman doomed to that long moonless chase.'

We have the authority of the distinguished ornithologist, Mr. Yarrell,[1] for stating the birds in question to be bean-geese, coming southwards in large flocks on the approach of winter, partly from Scotland and its islands, but chiefly from Scandinavia. They choose dark nights for their migration, and utter a loud and very peculiar cry. It has been observed in every part of England—in Norfolk, in Gloucestershire, and as far west as Cornwall. A gentleman was riding alone near the Land's End on a still dark night, when the yelping cry broke out above his head, so suddenly, and to all appearance so near, that he instinctively pulled up his horse as if to allow the pack to pass, the animal trembling violently at the unexpected sounds.

Mr. Buckland[2] has reported portents of a somewhat similar character on the English Channel. A rustling rushing sound is heard there on the dark still nights of winter, and is called the Herring Spear or Herring

[1] Notes and Queries, vol. v. p. 596.

[2] Curiosities of Natural History, second series, p. 285.

Piece by the fishermen of Dover and Folkestone. This is caused by the flight of those pretty little birds the redwings, as they cross the Channel on their way to warmer regions. The fishermen listen to the sound with awe, yet regard it on the whole as an omen of good success with their nets. But they deprecate the cry of the 'Seven Whistlers' (named in the sonnet above quoted from Wordsworth), and consider it a death-warning. 'I heard 'em one dark night last winter,' said an old Folkestone fisherman. 'They come over our heads all of a sudden, singing "ewe, ewe," and the men in the boat wanted to go back. It came on to rain and blow soon afterwards, and was an awful night, sir; and sure enough before morning a boat was upset, and seven poor fellows drowned. I know what makes the noise, sir; it's them long-billed curlews, but I never likes to hear them.'

But to return to the Gabriel hounds. In the neighbourhood of Leeds the phenomenon assumes another name and another character. It is there called 'Gabble retchet,' and held to be the souls of unbaptised children doomed to flit restlessly around their parents' abode. Now, it is a widespread belief that such children have no rest after death. In North Germany they are said to be turned into the meteors called Will-o'-the-wisp, and so to flit about and hover between heaven and earth. In Scotland, unbaptised infants are supposed to wander in woods and solitudes lamenting their hard fate, and I know that a few years back, at Chudleigh, in Devonshire, a servant in the clergyman's family asked her mistress, whether what the people of the place said was really true, about the souls of unchristened babies wandering in the air till the Judgment Day. And it is very remarkable that German folk

lore connects unbaptised infants with the Furious Host or wild hunt, which is evidently the same as the Gabriel hounds of the North and the Wisht hounds of the West of England. The mysterious lady Frau Bertha is ever attended by troops of unbaptised children, and she takes them with her when she joins the Wild Huntsman, and sweeps with him and his wild pack across the wintry sky.

Mr. Baring-Gould heard of this hunt in Iceland from his guide Jón, under the name of the Yule host; and in his 'Iceland, its Scenes and Sagas,' pp. 199–203, he gives so lucid an account of the myth that I am thankful, by his kind permission and that of his publishers, Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co., to insert it in these pages. My readers will observe that he lays all the rout to the charge of the wind, not of the bean-geese; and certainly a winter wind would account for any amount of confusion and turmoil, especially on the wild moors and hills of the North. Still I do think that some of the wild stories and superstitions point to the birds in question as their originators, at least in part:—

'Odin, or Wodin, is the Wild Huntsman who nightly tears on his white horse over the German and Norwegian forests and moor-sweeps, with his legion of hellhounds. Some luckless woodcutter, on a still night, is returning through the pinewoods; the air is sweet-scented with matchless pine fragrance. Overhead the sky is covered with grey vapour, but a mist is on all the land; not a sound among the fir-tops; and the man starts at the click of a falling cone. Suddenly his ear catches a distant wail: a moan rolls through the interlacing branches: nearer and nearer comes the sound. There is the winding of a long horn waxing louder and

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louder, the baying of hounds, the rattle of hoofs and paws on the pine-tree tops. A blast of wind rolls along, the firs bend as withes, and the woodcutter sees the wild huntsman and his rout reeling by in frantic haste.

'The Wild Huntsman chases the wood spirits, and he is to be seen at cockcrow, returning with the little Dryads hanging to his saddlebow by their yellow locks. This chase goes by different names. The huntsman in parts of Germany is still called Wôde, and the chase after him Wüthendes Heer.[1] In Danzig the huntsman is Dyterbjernat, *i.e.* Diedrick of Bern, the same as Theodoric the Great. In Schleswig, he is Duke Abel, who slew his brother in 1250. In Normandy, in the Pyrenees, and in Scotland, King Arthur rides nightly through the land. In the Franche-Comté, he is Herod in pursuit of the Holy Innocents. In Norway, the hunt is called the Aaskarreya, the chase of the inhabitants of Asgarth. (Hence perhaps our word skurry.) In Sweden, it is Odin's hunt. This is the Netherland account of it: In the neighbourhood of the Castle of Wynedal, there dwelt, a long time ago, an aged peasant, who had a son that was entirely devoted to the chase. When the old peasant lay on his deathbed, he had his son called to him, for the purpose of giving him a last Christian exhortation. He came not, but whistling to his dogs went out into the thicket. At this the old man was struck with despair, and he cursed his son with the appalling words: "Hunt, then, for ever!—ay, for ever!" He then turned his head and fell asleep in Christ. From that time the unhappy son has wandered restless about the woods, and the whole neighbourhood re-echoes with the voice of the huntsman and the baying of dogs.

[1] The German word *wuth* is cognate with the name Odin. Our old English word 'wood,' equivalent to mad, is similarly related.

'In Thuringia and elsewhere, it is Hakelnberg, or Hackelnbärend, who thus rides, and this is the reason.

'Hakelnberg was a knight, passionately fond of the chase. On his deathbed he would not listen to the priest, nor hearken to his mention of heaven. "I care not for heaven," growled he, "I care only for the hunt!" "Then hunt until the last day!" exclaimed the priest. And now, through storm and rain, the wild huntsman fleets. A faint barking or yelping in the air announces his approach, a screechowl flies before him, called by the people *Tutösel*. Wanderers who fall in his way throw themselves on their faces, and let him ride over them.

'Near Fontainebleau, Hugh Capet is believed to ride, at Blois, the hunt is called the Chasse Macabée.

'Children who die unbaptised often join the rout. Once two children in the Bern Overland were on a moor together; one slept, the other was awake; suddenly the wild hunt swept by, a voice called, "Shall we wake the child?" "No!" answered a second voice, "it will be with us soon." The sleeping child died that night. Gervaise of Tilbury says, that in the thirteenth century, by full-moon towards evening, the wild hunt was frequently seen in England traversing forest and down. In the twelfth century it was called in England the Herlething; it appeared in the reign of Henry II., and was witnessed by many. The banks of the Wye was the scene of the most frequent chases; at the head of the troop rode the ancient British Herla.

'King Herla had once been to the marriage-feast of a dwarf who lived in a mountain. As he left the bridal hall, the host presented him with horses, dogs, and hunting gear; also with a bloodhound, which was set on the saddlebow before the king, and the troop was

bidden not to get off their horses till the dog leaped down.

'On returning to his palace, the king learned that he had been absent for two hundred years, which had passed as one night, whilst he was in the mountain with the dwarf. Some of the retainers jumped off their horses and fell to dust, but the king and the rest ride on till the bloodhound bounds from the saddle, which will be at the last Day.

'In many parts of France the huntsman is called Harlequin, or Henequin; and I cannot but think that the Italian Harlequin on the stage, which has become a necessary personage in our Christmas pantomime, is the Wild Huntsman. It is worth observing that the Yule or Christmas, the season of pantomimes, is the time when the wild huntsman rides, and his host is often called the Yule troop.

'I have said that the Wild Huntsman rides in the woods of Fontainebleau. He is known to have blown his horn loudly, and rushed over the palace with all his hounds, before the assassination of Henry IV.

'On Dartmoor, in Devonshire, the same chase continues; it is called the Wisht hunt, and there are people now living who have witnessed it.

'Now for the names, Wôd, Herod, Hackelnbärend, &c. Perhaps Icelandic will help us to explain the myth. Wôd is evidently Woden; the name is derived from the preterite of a verb, signifying to rage:—

| | *Infinitive* | *Perfect* | *Hence the Names* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Icelandic | Vatha | Oth | Othr, Othinn |
| Old High German | Watan | Wuot | Wuotan, Wodin |
| Old Saxon | Wadan | Wôd | Wôd, Wôdan |

'Hackelnbärend is the Icelandic Hekluberandi, the mantle-bearer; Herod is derived from Her-rauthi, the

red lord. This name is known in the north (Hernath's Saga, *Kormak Saga* and *Fornmana Sögur*, ii. 259). But Dr. Mannhardt derives the name from Hrôths, rumour, fame. The name of Chasse Macabée is given from the allusion to it in the Bible (2 Maccabees v. 2–4). "Then it happened, that through all the city, for the space almost of forty days, there were seen horsemen running in the air, in cloth of gold, and armed with lances, like a band of soldiers. And troops of horsemen in array, encountering and running one against another, with shaking of shields, and multitudes of pikes, and drawing of swords, and casting of darts, and glittering of golden ornaments, and harness of all sorts. Wherefore every man prayed that that apparition might turn to good."

'When men began to name the different operations of nature, they called the storm, from its vehemence, its *rage*, "the raging"—Wuothan, Wôden; or from its coming at regular *times*, tempestus; or from its *outpourings*, λαῖλαψ (cogn. λαπάζω, λαπάσσω, λάπτω); or again from its *breathing*, storm (styrma, Icelandic, to puff; sturmen, Teut., to make a noise; thus, Gisah trumbaro inti meniga sturmenta, *Schilt, Thesaur., sub voce*—Christ saw the musicians and the multitude making a noise); our word gale comes from its whistling and *singing*—the root is also preserved in nightingale, the night-singer (gala, Icel. cogn. yell), and from this Odin (the storm) got his name of Galdnir, or Göldnir, and Christmastide was hight Yule; or from its *gushing* forth like a flood, we get the word gust (Icel. geysa and gjósa); or, once more, from the storm *cloaking* the sky, covering the fair blue with a mantle of cloud, it got its name of Procella (cogn. celo, προκαλύπτω, I screen with a cloak); and so we

find the Wild Huntsman, who, you see, is the storm, called Hackelnbärend, from Hekluberandi, the cloak-bearer.

'Now, in the first ages, there was no intention whatever of making the raging storm into a god, nor expressing a divine act in saying that the storm chased the sere leaves; yet, by degrees, the epithet Wôden was given form and figure, and became personified as a deity; then, too, the idea of the storm chasing the leaves became perverted into a myth representing Wôden as pursuing the yellow-haired wood-nymphs.'

But to return to auguries and portents. The mention of sneezings in the passage quoted in page 97 from Alcuin is remarkable, for here again a very early superstition holds its ground in the nineteenth century. Nurses in Durham, not to say mothers, still invoke a blessing on children when they sneeze; indeed, some extend the practice to adults. In Germany such is certainly the case. A young cousin of mine, lately at school in the Duchy of Wurtemburg, was greatly astonished to find that a fit of sneezing in which one of the professors indulged, was responded to by a cry from all the pupils of 'Gesundheit,' or 'good health;' an attention which he seemed to expect as much as the Emperor Tiberius, who was extremely particular in requiring it from his courtiers. The practice comes from early pagan days. The ancient Greeks, in observing it, claimed to follow the example of Prometheus, who stole celestial fire to animate the beautiful figure he had made of clay; as the fire permeated its frame, the newly-formed creature sneezed,[1] and the delighted

[1] It is remarkable that in the account of the raising of the Shunammite's son by Elijah, the lad is said to have given his first signs of renewed vitality by sneezing seven times.—S. B. G.

Prometheus invoked blessings on it. At any rate the custom was of long standing in Aristotle's days. St. Chrysostom names sneezing among other things of which people made a sign, and St. Eligius warns his flock to take no notice of it. It has, however, been noticed, and good wishes have been uttered on the occasion far and near, in Christendom and heathendom alike—in the remotest parts of Africa, and as far east as Siam. Clarke in his Travels refers to the usage as common in Scandinavia, and in the year 1542, when Hernando de Soto, the famous conquestator of Florida, had an interview with the Cacique Guachoya, the following curious incident occurred. In the midst of their conversation, the Cacique happened to sneeze; upon this, all his attendants bowed their heads, opened and closed their arms, and making their signs of veneration, saluted their prince with various phrases of the same purport: 'May the sun guard you!' 'May the sun be with you!' 'May the sun shine upon you, defend you, prosper you!' and the like.[1]

I will close this chapter with a verse on sneezing, which is current in Buckinghamshire to this day:—

Sneeze on Monday, sneeze for danger,
Sneeze on Tuesday, kiss a stranger,
Sneeze on Wednesday, get a letter,
Sneeze on Thursday, something better,
Sneeze on Friday, sneeze for sorrow,
Saturday, see your true-love to-morrow.

[1] Theodore Irving's Conquest of Florida, quoted in Notes and Queries, vol. v. p. 394.

## CHAPTER V.

### CHARMS AND SPELLS.

For Warts—Ringworm—Whooping-cough—Toothache—Weak Eyes—Epilepsy—Erysipelas—Ague—St. Vitus' Dance—Bleeding at the Nose—Goitre—Worms—Cramp—Healing of Wounds—Sympathy—Rheumatism—Foul (in Cattle)—The Minister and the Cow—The Lockerby Penny—Gold and Silver Water—Irish Stones—Calf hung up in the Chimney—Need Fire—Dartmoor Charms—Candle and Pins—Cumbrian Charm.

On the Borderland, as elsewhere, superstition is apt boldly to intrude into the physician's province, and proffer relief in every ill that flesh is heir to, by means which he does not condescend to recognise—that is, by charms and spells. Curiously enough, the Wilkie MS. is perfectly silent on this head, but through the kindness of my friends, I have been enabled to collect a good deal of information respecting these byways to health and strength as practised in the northern counties of England. There is scarcely an ailment for which there is not some remedy at hand; for some a large variety are offered. Thus for warts, a schoolboy's first trouble, a Northumbrian lad has the choice of several modes of relief. He may take a large black snail, rub the wart well with it, and throw the poor creature against a thorn hedge, confident that as it perishes on one of the twigs the warts will disappear. This remedy has been practised very widely, and still lingers in Hampshire and in Devonshire, where the victim slug or snail may

yet be seen impaled on its thorn-bush. Again, he may count the number of warts which torment him, put into a small bag an equal number of pebbles, and drop the bag where four roads meet. Whoever picks up the bag will get the warts. This charm is practised, too, in the West of England. It is sometimes varied by the substitution of a cinder applied to the warts and then tied up in paper. A third plan is to steal a piece of raw meat, rub the warts with it, and throw it away. Southey mentions this little charm in 'The Doctor.' Did he learn it among the hills of Westmoreland? A fourth is to make as many knots in a hair as there are warts on the hands, and throw it away. A fifth is to apply eel's blood. Again, boys take a new pin, cross the warts with it nine times, and fling it over the left shoulder; or they cut an apple in two, rub the wart with each part, tie the apple together, and bury it, confident that as the apple decays the warts will disappear. This, too, is done in Devonshire, where they also take a wheat stalk with as many knots as there are warts on the hand to be dealt with, name over the stalk the person afflicted, and then bury it. As it decays the warts will disappear.

My informant, a clergyman from Devonshire, pleads guilty to having used this charm himself, and by means of it cured his brother of some stubborn warts. He adds: 'Gypsies charm away warts. I have known an instance of their curing them in this way. I know, too, a curious case of the kind, substantiated by the master and boys of Marlborough Grammar School. A boy had his hands covered with warts, which disfigured them most unpleasantly. As the lad passed the window of an old woman in the town who dabbled a little in charms and spells, she looked out and called to him to count his warts. He did so, and told her the exact number.

"By such a day," she said, naming a day within the fortnight, "they shall all be gone." She shut the window, and the boy passed on, but by the day indicated every one of the warts, which had troubled him for years, was gone.'

The vicar of Stamfordham, in Northumberland, tells me of an old man in that village who charmed away that obstinate complaint the ringworm. His patients were obliged to come to him before sunrise, when he used to take some earth from his garden and rub the part affected while repeating certain words not recorded. The secret of this charm might be communicated by a man to a woman or *vice versâ*, but if man told it to man or woman to woman the spell would be broken.

Several cures for whooping-cough are practised in this village, and doubtless in the whole neighbourhood: such as putting a trout's head into the mouth of the sufferer and, as they say, letting the trout breathe into the child's mouth; or making porridge over a stream running from north to south. This last rite was performed not very long ago at a streamlet, near a spring-head, which runs for above fifty yards due south, through a field called Fool or Foul Hoggers, near West Belsay. A girdle was placed over this stream, a fire made upon the girdle, and porridge cooked upon it, and the number of candidates was so great that each patient got but one spoonful as a dose. This story was related to the Rev. J. F. Bigge by one of the recipients; it took place when she was a girl.

Another plan consists in tying round the child's neck a hairy caterpillar in a small bag. As the insect dies the cough vanishes. And another in carrying the patient through the smoke of a limekiln. Children have

lately been brought from some distance to the lime-kilns at Hawkwell near Stamfordham, and passed backwards and forwards. A variation of this treatment prevails in my native city. Last winter a little girl suffering from whooping-cough was taken for several days successively to the gasworks, to breathe what her mother called 'the harmonious air' (I imagine she had some notion of ammonia in her head!), and I learnt from her that several other children were in attendance at the time for the same purpose.

Again, the little sufferer may be passed under the belly of an ass or a piebald pony with good hopes of a cure in consequence. This is carried out more fully at Middlesborough, where a friend of mine lately saw a child passed nine times over the back and under the belly of a donkey, and was informed by the parents that they hoped thus to cure it of whooping-cough. The mention of a piebald pony is curious, for Abp. Whately observes in his 'Miscellaneous Remains' (p. 273), that a man riding on such a horse is supposed, in virtue of his steed to have the power of prescribing with success for the whooping-cough, and is promptly obeyed; so that when such a person once said to the enquiring parents, 'Tie a rope round the child's neck,' the rope was tied without the least hesitation.

From the late Dr. Johnson I learnt of another remedy current in Sunderland: the crown of the head is shaved and the hair hung upon a bush or tree, in firm belief that the birds carrying it away to their nests will carry away the cough along with it. A somewhat similar notion lies at the root of a Devonshire mode of cure. Put a hair of the patient's head between two slices of buttered bread and give it to a dog. The dog will get the cough and the patient lose it. Another Devonian remedy

is to place a smooth mullien leaf under the heel of the left foot.

Another mode of cure for this scourge of childhood prevails in the North of Ireland. A lady residing in the county of Derry, my own near relation, tells me that a short time ago her servants summoned her out of doors to see a stranger who was peering about in the yard but would not speak to any of them. She went, and found a respectable middle-aged woman, apparently a farmer's wife, who, seeing her to be the mistress of the house, eagerly went up and prayed her to save her child. In answer to the lady's enquiries the woman said, 'My child is dying of whooping-cough; the doctors can do nothing more, so I went to a skilled man, and he told me to fill a small bottle with milk and take it to a house I had never visited before. I must cross the water three times to get to it, and must speak no word by the way till I see the master or the master's wife of this strange house. Then I must tell my tale and ask whether they keep a ferret. If they do I must pour the milk in a saucer, see the ferret drink half of it, return the other half into the bottle, take it home and give it to the child. He will drink it and be cured at once. Now I see you have ferrets, let me have one at once. I have been out so many days and have not been able to find a strange house where they kept them.' My friend, as kindly as she could, endeavoured to disabuse the poor woman's mind of this strange superstition, but a belief in it was deeply rooted in her mind.

Since I received this narration I find that something similar holds its ground in my own county. The following instance is communicated to me by the Rev. J. W. Hick of Byer's Green:—'A boy came into my

kitchen the other day with a basin containing a gill of new milk, saying his mother hoped I would let my son's white ferret drink half of it, and then he would take the other half home to the bairn to cure its cough. I found the boy had been getting milk in the village for some days, and thus giving our ferret half of it.'

For toothache there is remedy also. The inhabitants of Stamfordham, the Northumbrian village named already, have been accustomed to walk to Winter's Gibbet, on Elsdon Moor, some ten or twelve miles off, for a splinter of the wood to cure toothache. How the wood was to be applied we are not told, but the remedy sounds almost as ghastly as that resorted to for the same purpose at Tavistock in Devonshire—biting a tooth out of a skull in the churchyard, and keeping it always in the pocket.

Nor is weakness of the eyes uncared for. I have myself seen and handled a talisman from the Tweedside, which in the hands of an old witch-woman was deemed powerful to heal them. It was called a lammer-bead, lammer being the Scotch for amber, from the French 'l'ambre;' and wondrous were the cures it wrought, in the witch-woman's hands, when drawn over inflamed eyes or sprained limbs. It is apparently of amber, and probably was dug out of an ancient British grave or barrow. The old woman has recently died, but the bead is cherished in her family as an heir-loom.[1]

Of epilepsy the Rev. George Ornsby writes: 'I

[1] Compare this with a Devonshire talisman. In the parish of Thurshelton, North Devon, lives an old lady (Miss Soaper), possessed of a bluish-green stone called the 'kenning stone,' which is much resorted to by people troubled with sore eyes. If the eye be rubbed with the stone, the sufferer is cured.—S. B. G.

remember, when a boy, application being made to my father for a halfcrown, to be offered by him the next time he went to Holy Communion at Lanchester Church, and asked for again on behalf of the applicant, in order that it might be made into a ring to be worn by an epileptic patient.' In Yorkshire the charm is rather different. The ring must be made of a halfcrown from the Offertory collection, but thirty pence are tendered for it, collected from as many different persons. Not ten years ago, the Vicar of Danby, near Whitby, was asked for a halfcrown after Holy Communion, by a farmer, one of his most respectable parishioners, the thirty pence being prepared in exchange. I may perhaps fitly add here, that a belief in the efficacy of the sacred elements in the Eucharist, for the cure of bodily disease, is widely spread throughout the North. A clergyman has informed me that he knows of one element having been secreted for this purpose, and that he has found it necessary to watch persons who appeared to have such an intention.

Certain superstitious beliefs are undoubtedly very widely spread. Silver rings made from Offertory money are still worn by epileptic patients in the Forest of Dean, and, with some variation, the charm is in use in Devonshire. A relation of mine in that county writes of it thus: 'Twenty years ago, soon after we settled in this place, we were surprised by a visit from a farmer, a respectable-looking man, from Ilsington, a village about six miles off. With a little hesitation he introduced himself, and told us that his son had long been a sufferer from the falling-sickness, that medical care had utterly failed, and as a last resource he had been advised to collect seven sixpences from seven maidens in seven different parishes, and have them melted down

into a ring for the lad to wear. "I can't tell you," he went on, "how many miles I have travelled on this business, for the villages hereabouts are far apart. So hearing a family of ladies had settled here, I thought I would come up the hill, to see if one among them had a heart kind enough to help my poor Bill." The appeal was irresistible; the sixpence was given, and the simple-hearted countryman went away full of gratitude, but not daring to utter it for fear of breaking the spell.' Some such superstition has doubtless prevailed, more or less, at some period through the length and breadth of England. My kind contributor, Mrs. L——, has forwarded to me the following extract from a curious old journal and account-book, kept by a Lincolnshire gentleman, the uncle of her grandfather, in the year 1754:—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| A poor woman at Barton, who had fits, towards buying a silver ring, 1*d.* . . . . . | 00 | 00 | 01 |

Very different is the treatment of epilepsy in the North of Scotland, as made known to us by Dr. Mitchell, in his deeply interesting paper on the Superstitions of the North-west Highlands and Islands of Scotland.[1] For the cure of this disease, he informs us that a literal downright sacrifice to a nameless but secretly acknowledged power is practised there: 'On the spot where the epileptic first falls, a black cock[2] is buried alive,

[1] Edinburgh: Mill and Co. (1862).

[2] Black cocks have been extensively used in magical incantations and in sacrifices to the devil. A French receipt for raising the devil runs as follows: Take a black cock under your left arm, and go at midnight to where four cross-roads meet. Then cry three times 'Poule noire!' or 'Poule noire á vendre!' or else utter Robert nine times; and the devil will appear, take the cock, and leave you a handful of money. The famous

along with a lock of the patient's hair and some parings of his nails. I have seen at least three epileptic idiots for whom this is said to have been done. A woman who assisted at such a sacrifice minutely described to me the order of procedure.' According to Dr. Mitchell, this sacrifice dates from remote antiquity, and is very widely spread. The cock, a creature consecrated to Apollo, who in classic mythology was in some measure connected with the healing art, was in Egypt sacrificed to Osiris, whom we may regard as the same divinity under another title. This bird has, throughout the East, been sacrificed during the prevalence of infectious disease, and in Algeria it is still drowned in a sacred well to cure epilepsy and madness.

The purely Celtic superstitions have, indeed, an unmistakably heathen character about them which is almost appalling. One author transcribes, from the old records of the Presbytery of Dingwall, extracts which show that down to A.D. 1678, bulls were sacrificed on

Jewish banker, Samuel Bernard, who died in 1789, leaving an enormous property, had a favourite black cock, which was regarded by many as uncanny, and as unpleasantly connected with the amassing of his fortune. The bird died a day or two before his master.

Further, a black cock sings in the Scandinavian Niflheim, or 'land of gloom,' and the signal of the dawn of Ragnavok, 'the great day of arousing,' is to be the crowing of a gold-coloured cock. Guibert de Nogent writes (De vita sua, l. r. c. 26): 'A certain clerk lived in the country of Beauvais; he was a scribe, and I knew him. Once he had a conversation with another clerk, a sorcerer, in the castle of Breteuil, who said to him, "If it were worth my while, I would show you how you might daily make money without having to work for it." The other having asked him how this could be accomplished, the sorcerer replied, "You must make a sacrifice to the citizen of hell, that is, the devil." "What victim should I have to offer?" asked the other. "A cock," replied the sorcerer, "but it must be a cock born of an egg laid of a Monday in the month of March. After having roasted the cock at the beginning of night, take it with you, still on the spit, and come with me to the nearest fishpond,"' &c.—S. B. G.

August 25 at the little island of Innis Maree, in Loch Maree, and milk poured forth upon the hills as a libation. Several members of the Mackenzie family were cited that year before the Presbytery, 'for sacrificing a bull in ane heathenish manner, in the island of Saint Rufus, commonly called Elfan Moury in Lochew, for the recovery of the health of Cirstane Mackenzie, who was formerly sick and valetudinarie,' and it appears that the rite was one frequently performed. The 25th of August is the feast-day of St. Malrubius, now called Mourie or Maree, the patron saint of the district; but the people of the place often call him the God Mourie, which plainly shows that the worship formerly paid to some local Celtic divinity has been transferred to the saint. When it finally disappeared we are not informed, but a similar observance has been handed on to our own day in the county of Moray. Not fifteen years ago, a herd of cattle in that county being attacked with murrain, one of them was sacrificed by burying alive, as a propitiatory offering for the rest. Only among the Celtic population of Cornwall can we find a parallel to this. I have been informed that within the memory of man, in a remote village of that county, a calf has been sacrificed during a visitation of sickness among cattle, but I regret to say that I have been unable to verify the statement.[1]

The same ferocious character may be traced in the remedy for erysipelas, lately practised in the parish of

[1] I have been told that on Midsummer-day, on Buckland-in-the-Moor, in Devonshire, a number of people assemble in a field called the Ploi-field, in the midst of which is a huge granite block. The young men then range the moors in quest of a sheep, which when caught is brought to the stone and there stabbed to death with their knives, after which they sprinkle themselves and others with the blood. The day ends with games of all sorts.—S. B. G.

Lochcarron, in the North-west Highlands: it consists in cutting off one half of the ear of a cat, and letting the blood drop on the part affected.

Ague is a disease which has always been deemed peculiarly open to the influence of charms. It is said in Devonshire that you may give it to your neighbour, by burying under his threshold a bag containing the parings of a dead man's nails, and some of the hairs of his head: your neighbour will be afflicted with ague till the bag is removed. In Somersetshire and the adjoining counties, the patient shuts a large black spider into a box, and leaves it to perish; in Flanders he imprisons it between the two halves of a walnut-shell, and wears it round his neck; in Ireland he swallows it alive. Flemish folk lore also enjoins any one who has the ague to go early in the morning to an old willow, make three knots in one of its branches, and say, 'Good morrow, Old One; I give thee the cold; good morrow, Old One.' Compare with this a mode of cure practised in Lincolnshire. It was thus described by one who had suffered from the disease, and tried the remedy in her young days. She was an old woman when her clergyman, the Rev. George Ornsby, wrote it down in her own words. I may add that she has but recently died:—

'When I wur a young lass, about eighteen years auld, or thereabouts, I were living sarvant wi' a farmer down i' Marshland (borders of Lincolnshire). While I were there I were sorely 'tacked wi' t'ague, and sorely I shakked wi' it. Howsomever, I got mysen cured, and I'll tell ye how it were. They were on mawing, and I hed to tak t'dinner t'it men 'at were mawing i' t' field. Sae I went wi' t' dinner, and ane o' t' men were an auld man, and while he were sitting o' t' grass eating him

dinner, I were stood looking at him, and talking t'him, and shakking all t' time. "Young woman," says he, "ye've gotten t' shakking (a name they commonly give to the ague) very bad." "Ay," says I, "I have that." "Wad ye like to be shot on't?" says he. "Ay, that wud I," says I. "Why then," says he, "thou mun do as I tell thee. Dost thou see yon espin-tree t'other side o' the field, ther?" "Ay, dif I," says I. "Why then, ma lass, thou mun gan along to where thou sees ma coat lying yonder, and thou'lt fin' a knife in ma pocket, and thou mun tak t' knife and cut off a long lock o' thy heer (and lang and black ma heer were then, ye may believe me); and then thou mun gan to t' espin-tree, and thou mun tak a greet pin and wrap thy heer around it, and thou mun pin it t'it bark o' t'espin-tree; and while thou'st daeing it thou mun say, 'Espin-tree, espin-tree, I prithee to shak an shiver insted o' me.' An it'll come to pass 'at thou'lt niver hae t' shakking more, if thou nobbut gans straight home, and niver speaks to naebody till thou gets theer." Sae I did as he tell't me, but if ye believe me I were sorely flayed; but howsomever t'auld man cured me that way, and I've niver had t' shakking fra that day to this.'

I suppose that the ceaseless trembling of the aspen-leaves, even when all around is still, is suggestive of mystery; for certain it is that this tree comes forward a good deal in the folk lore of different nations. The Bretons explain the phenomenon by averring that the Cross was made from its wood,[1] and that the trembling marks the shuddering of sympathetic horror.[2] The

[1] The 'Legenda Aurea' asserts that the Cross was made of four kinds of wood: the palm, the cypress, the olive, and the cedar.—S. B. G.

[2] Mrs. Hemans came across this belief in Denbighshire, and therefore called it a Welsh legend, on which De Quincey (in his essay on

Germans have a theory of their own, embodied in a little poem, which may be thus translated :—

Once, as Our Saviour walked with men below,
His path of mercy through a forest lay;
And mark how all the drooping branches show,
What homage best a silent tree may pay!

Only the aspen stands erect and free,
Scorning to join that voiceless worship pure;
But see! He casts one look upon the tree,
Struck to the heart she trembles evermore!

If the Cross was thought to have been made of aspen-wood, the Crown of Thorns was in the Middle Ages said to have been formed of white-thorn branches, and the white-thorn was reverenced accordingly. Mr. Kelly, however, affirms that this tree possessed a sacred character in ancient heathen days, as having sprung from the lightning, and being, in consequence, scatheless in storms. It was used for marriage torches among the Romans, and wishing-rods were made from it in Germany.[1]

But to return. The Rev. J. Barnby informs me of the following cure for St. Vitus' Dance, the patient having been daughter to his parish clerk, in a Yorkshire village. Medical aid having failed, the parents deemed the girl bewitched, and would not be dissuaded from consulting a wise man, who lived at or near Ripon, thirty miles off. The wise man told them that if the disease came from an evil eye, an evil wish, or an evil prayer, he could remove it, but if by the direct visitation of God he could not. Accordingly, he tried the remedy for the first and second causes, but in vain. He then resorted to the proper measures for the third cause, which con-

Modern Superstition) remarks that it is not simply Welsh but European, or, rather, coextensive with Christendom.

[1] Indo-European Folk Lore, p. 181.

sisted chiefly in prayers; and the parents aver that at the very time of his praying the girl began to amend, she being ignorant meanwhile of what was going on. The wise man gave her a charm, to wear as a preservative against the person who had bewitched her, and the recovery was perfect.

The following curious history was communicated to me by the Rev. J. F. Bigge. A farmer's wife who lived at Belsay-dean-home, towards the south-west of Northumberland, was suddenly seized with a violent bleeding at the nose; and the usual modes of stopping it having been tried in vain, one of the neighbours, who had clustered round her, said, 'Gan away to Michael W——, at Black Heddon, and fetch him quick. He'll ken o' summat to do her good.' Now, this Michael W—— was and is esteemed a wizard. The husband went off at once for the wizard, who came with him homewards across the Belsay burn, but stopped at that point, muttered some words, and saying, 'She'll be well now,' turned and went straight home. However, when the farmer got back, he found his wife as bad as ever; so turning round he retraced his steps to Michael's door, and told him the state of affairs. 'It's strange she's no better,' said Michael; 'but, eh! I've forgotten; there's another burn which runs under the road near the lodge.' Back he went, crossed over that burn, repeated his charm, and confidently stated that the patient was better. The farmer went home, and found that the bleeding had stopped.

Goitre, that scourge of the Swiss valleys, is sometimes found in our country, and superstition offers a remedy for it, though a revolting one. The Rev. J. W. Hick, Incumbent of Byer's Green, informs me that on asking a parishioner thus afflicted whether she had tried

any measures for curing it, she answered: 'No, I have not, though I have been a sufferer eleven years. But a very respectable man told me to-day, that it would pass away if I rubbed a dead child's hand nine times across the lump. I've not much faith in it myself, but I've just tried it.' Somewhat similar measures were resorted to by another sufferer not many years ago. The body of a suicide who had hanged himself in Hesilden-dene, not far from Hartlepool, was laid in an outhouse, awaiting the coroner's inquest. The wife of a pitman at Castle Eden Colliery, suffering from a wen in the neck, according to advice given her by a 'wise woman,' went alone, and lay all night in the outhouse, with the hand of the corpse on her wen. She had been assured that the hand of a suicide was an infallible cure. The shock to the nervous system from that terrible night was so great that she did not rally for some months, and eventually she died from the wen. This happened about the year 1853, under the cognisance of my informant, the Rev. H. B. Tristram. It may be observed that they say in North Germany that tetters and warts disappear if touched by the hand of a corpse.

Another friend, the Rev. J. Cundill, tells me how, while he was fishing a short time ago in Stainsby Beck, in Cleveland, a peasant came along the stream in search of a 'wick' (*anglicè*, quick or live) trout, to lay on the stomach of one of his children who was much troubled with worms, a trout so applied being a certain cure for that complaint. A different mode of treatment was made known to me, in the autumn of 1863, by the fireside of my landlady's kitchen at Sprouston, by the Tweedside, after a long day's fishing. I was informed that water in which earthworms had been boiled was an infallible remedy in such a case. I ventured to

demur to its efficacy, on which the old woman broke out, 'Bless me, Mr. Henderson! will ye no believe that? Why, wasn't Jeanie Wright fair brought back frae the grave when she was as gude as dead? A' the doctors had gi'en her up, but there were them about her that wudna knuckle down without ane mair attempt. So they honkit a pint o' worms, and biled them in fresh water, and gaed her the broo to drink. Frae that hour she began to mend, an' now she's as stout a woman as ony an' ye may see for yersell an ye gan to the west end o' the town, for there she's livin' yet.'

For cramp our Durham remedy is to garter the left leg below the knee. An eel's skin worn about the naked leg is deemed a preventive too, especially by schoolboys. The eel's skin comes to light again in Northumberland. A sprained limb is bound up with it after the 'stamp-strainer' has stamped upon it with his foot. This stamp-straining is practised in that county, and is said to have great efficacy. When the first pang is over, they declare that the operation is painless. The Rev. J. F. Bigge has noted down how one W. R., of Belsay Lake House, who was skilled in the art, stamped for a sprain the arm of J. R., and cured her.

But to return to the subject of cramp. Some people lay their shoes across to avert it; others wear a tortoiseshell ring; others place a piece of brimstone in their beds. Coleridge, in his 'Table-Talk,'[1] records the approved mode of procedure in Christ's Hospital, which he believed had been in use in the school since its foundation in the reign of Edward VI. A boy when attacked by a fit of cramp would get out of bed, stand firmly on the leg affected, and make the sign of the cross over it, thrice repeating this formula:

[1] Vol. ii. p. 59.

The devil is tying a knot in my leg,
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, unloose it, I beg;
Crosses three we make to ease us,
Two for the thieves, and one for Christ Jesus.

Archbishop Whately deems it not unworthy of observation that the 'cramp-bone' of a leg of mutton, *i.e.* the patella or kneecap, has long been in repute as a preservative against this complaint.[1] I learn from the Rev. George Ornsby that rings or handles from coffins, made up and worn as finger-rings, are deemed efficacious in the West Riding. So they are in Cleveland. An old watchmaker at Stokesley, Robert Stevenson by name, used to cure 'scores of people' that way. But he confided to his choice friends that he never really made up the coffin-tyre they brought him: he took it from them, but it was less trouble to give them rings which he had by him.

This may, perhaps, be a not unsuitable place for introducing an instance of Devonshire superstition, so peculiar that it seems worthy of record. It was related to my fellow-worker by her friend the late Dr. Walker, of Teignmouth, a physician of some local celebrity. Within the last twenty years he had under his care a poor woman of that place, who was suffering from an extensive sore on the breast. When he visited her one day he was surprised to find the entire surface of the wound strewn over with a gritty substance, and a good deal of inflammation set up in consequence. In some displeasure he asked what they had been putting on, but for a long time he could get no answer, beyond 'Nothing at all, sir.' The people about were sullen, but the doctor was peremptory; and at last the woman's husband, rolling a mass of stone from under the bed,

[1] Miscellaneous Remains, page 274.

muttered, in genuine Devonshire phrase, 'Nothing but Peter's stone, and here *he* is!' On further enquiry it appeared that, incited by the neighbours, who had declared his wife was not getting well as she should, the poor fellow had walked by night from Teignmouth to Exeter, had flung stones against the figures on the west front of the cathedral (which is called St. Peter's by the common people), had succeeded at last in bringing down the arm of one of them, and had carried it home in triumph. Part of this relic had been pulverised, mixed with lard, and applied to the sore. I have never met with another instance of the kind, but doubtless it is not a solitary one. If the practice was ever a general one, we need not lay to the charge of Oliver Cromwell's army all the dilapidation of the glorious west front of Exeter Cathedral.

The treatment of surgical cases in the North by no means corresponds to that pursued by the Faculty. When a Northumbrian reaper is cut by his sickle, it is not uncommon to clean and polish the sickle. Lately, in the village of Stamfordham, a boy hurt his hand with a rusty nail. The nail was immediately taken to a blacksmith to file off the rust, and was afterwards carefully rubbed every day, before sunrise and after sunset, for a certain time; and thus the injured hand was perfectly healed.

How well this mode of treatment corresponds with that pursued by the Ladye of Buccleugh towards the wounded mosstrooper, William of Deloraine, as recounted by the 'Last Minstrel':—

> She drew the splinter from the wound,
> * * * * *
> No longer by his couch she stood,
> But she hath tà'en the broken lance,

And washed it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted, as if she galled his wound.
* * * * * *
Full long she toiled, for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true!

Probably Sir Walter Scott borrowed it as much from Border practice as from Border records. It seems in early days to have prevailed in many parts of the country, and still to linger here and there. Not long ago it was practised on a hayfork in the neighbourhood of Winchester, and I lately heard a reference to it in Devonshire. A young relation of mine, while riding in the green lanes of that county, lamed his pony by its treading on a nail. He took the poor creature to the village blacksmith, who immediately asked for the nail, and finding it had been left in the road, said, as he shook his head, 'Ah, sir, if you had picked it up and wiped it, and kept it warm and dry in your pocket, there'd have been a better chance for the pony, poor thing!'

The following communication from Mr. J. M. Tweddle tells of the same belief in Yorkshire:—'Some years ago, a relation of mine was crossing the moors from Whitby to his home at Stokesley, when he heard a woman's voice calling out loudly, "Canny man, canny man, d'ye come frae Stousley?" On his replying that he did, she begged him to take a harrow-tooth to the wise man of that place, as her husband had been injured by it, and she wished the wise man to polish and charm it. He took the harrow-tooth and placed it in his pocket, but, truth to tell, as soon as she was out of sight, he flung it away among the heather. However,

when, some time after, he passed that way again, the poor woman recognised him and thanked him heartily for doing her errand, saying that her husband had mended from the day the wise man got the bit of iron.'

It is curious to compare with these narrations the mode of procedure prescribed in North Germany. If a person has wounded himself, let him cut, in an upward direction, a piece from a branch of a fruit tree, and apply it to the recent wound so that the blood may adhere to it, and then lay it in some part of the house where it is quite dark, when the bleeding will cease. Or, when a limb has been amputated, the charmer takes a twig from a broom, and presses the wound together with it, wraps it in the bloody linen, and lays it in a dry place, saying,—

> The wounds of our Lord Christ
> They are not bound;
> But these wounds they are bound,
> In the name, &c.[1]

The sympathy here assumed between the cause of an injury and the victim, is in Durham held strongly to exist between anyone bitten by a dog and the animal that inflicted the bite. An inhabitant of that city recently informed me, that having been bitten in the leg by a savage dog about a month before, he took the usual precautions to prevent ultimate injury, but without satisfying his friends, more than twenty of whom had seriously remonstrated with him for not having the dog killed. This alone, they said, would ensure his safety; otherwise, should the dog hereafter go mad, even years hence, he would immediately be attacked with hydrophobia. These persons were of the middle class,

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 162.

and many of them had received a good education. The same belief, I find, prevails throughout Yorkshire.[1]

It is with reluctance that I approach the next anecdote, for, in truth, I can never recall it without pain; it tells the sad effects of local treatment of rheumatism. About twenty years have passed, since, after a long day's angling in the College (a small river which winds round the northern side of Cheviot), I entered the thatched cottage of a shepherd, which stood near the confluence of that stream with the Bowmont. The man and his wife bade me welcome, after the kindly hospitable fashion of that district. I grew interested in their conversation, and promised to visit them again when I came next into their neighbourhood. I did so during the following spring, but what was my grief at finding the man, who had seemed to me a model of strength, now a complete wreck; he was lying on a long settle by the fireside, wrapped in blankets. The poor woman, on seeing me, burst into tears, and it was some time before her suffering husband could tell me his tale of too-confiding simplicity.

In the latter part of the preceding autumn, he had caught cold while tending his flock on the mountain side; acute rheumatism had followed; he suffered a good deal, and, being of a sanguine temperament, chafed at the slow but safe steps adopted by the surgeon of the district. As week after week passed by with little amendment, constant pain and impending poverty induced him at last, in an evil hour, to give heed to his

[1] Compare with this the Devonshire belief that if anyone is bitten by a viper, the viper is to be killed, and the fat applied to the wound as an infallible remedy. I remember a cow being bitten by a viper and cured in this manner.—S. B. G.

neighbours' advice, and resort to 'the wise man who lived far over the hills.' The wise man declared that the case was desperate, and demanded desperate remedies. As the first step, he directed that the sufferer should be wrapped in a blanket and laid in the sharp running stream which flowed a few yards from the cottage. This was done with full faith, though it was the depth of winter. Never shall I forget the poor victim as he turned his dying eyes on me and said, 'Oh, sir, I laid there twenty minutes, but could endure it no longer; and I just said, "Lift me out—I'm dead." They took me out, and I've laid on this settle ever since.' A few days more, and the poor fellow had passed (as we humbly trust) to a better life, a sacrifice to one of the most cruel and heartless impostures I ever heard of. Had not death intervened, who can tell what further tortures might not have been in store for him at the hands of this ignorant and presuming monster?

The Rev. Henry Humble has communicated to me a story respecting the treatment of rheumatism in Dundee, widely different in its nature and results. A clergyman went to see an old woman of that place, who had not moved off her chair for years in consequence of severe rheumatism, which had settled in the knee. As is common among the poor, she would make the minister feel the painful swelling. I should add that he is a man of great muscular power, and not always aware of the force with which he uses it. He laid his hand on the part affected, and soon left the room to visit at some other tenements in the same row. Before he had gone his rounds in that quarter, he heard some one call him, and turning round, beheld his old friend up and about, loudly proclaiming that the priest's touch

had cured her. Certain it is, she has walked ever since.[1]

Passing by, for the present, different modes of cure for persons who have been bewitched, we will turn to the diseases of animals, for local superstition does not deem these beneath her notice. A gentleman farmer in the West Riding of Yorkshire, having some cattle affected by the foul or fellen (my informant, the Rev. George Ornsby, forgets which) and having heard that an old man in the neighbourhood, who had long practised farriery, was famous for curing the disease, went to consult him. The case was duly laid before the old man, who replied, with the utmost gravity, that he had cured 'a many,' and that as he had given up practice, he did not mind if he told him his secret. His directions were few and simple; the owner of the horse was to go at midnight into his orchard and *grave* a turf at the foot of the largest apple-tree therein, and then hang it carefully on the topmost bough of the tree, all in silence and alone. If this was duly performed, as the turf *muddered* away, so would the disease gradually leave the animal. The old farrier added that he had never known this mode of cure to fail.

This remedy is also mentioned in the late Mr. Denham's 'Folk Lore of the North of England,' with one addition—the turf cut must be one on which the beast has trodden with its diseased foot. Many people, he says, use no other remedy for the foul, looking upon this as an infallible cure.

Another tale from Northumberland must be given in

[1] The present Incumbent of B——, Devonshire, has the reputation of performing remarkable cures with his hand. He cured a child at Okehampton of a wen in the throat by touch, when the doctor had been of no service.—S. B. G.

the very words in which I received it from the Rev. J. F. Bigge, only premising that a poor woman had a cow, and that the cow was taken ill. The woman described its recovery as follows: 'I was advised, ye ken, to gan to the minister, ye ken, and I thought he might do something for her, ye ken; so a gaes to the minister, ye ken, and a sees him about her. "Well, sir," says I, "the coo's bad; cuddn't ye come and make a prayer o'er her like?" "Well, Janet," says he, "I'll come." And come he did, ye ken, and laid his hand on her shoulder, ye ken, and said, "If ye live ye live, and if ye dee ye dee." Weel, ye ken, she mended fra that hour. Next year who but the minister should be ta'en ill, and I thought I wud just gan and see the auld minister—it was but friendly, ye ken. I fund him in bed, and I gans up till him, and lays my hand on his shoulder, and I says, "If ye live ye live, and if ye dee ye dee." So he burst out a-laughing, ye ken, and his throat got better fra that moment, ye ken.' It would appear that the poor man was suffering from quinsy, which broke from the effort of laughing.

At Lockerby, in Dumfriesshire, is still preserved a piece of silver called the Lockerby Penny, which is thus used against madness in cattle. It is put in a cleft stick, and a well is stirred round with it, after which the water is bottled off and given to any animal so affected. A few years ago, in a Northumbrian farm, a dog bit an ass, and the ass bit a cow; the penny was sent for, and a deposit of £50 actually left till it was restored. The dog was shot, the cuddy died, but the cow was saved through the miraculous virtue of the charm. On the death of the man who thus borrowed the penny, several bottles of water were found among his effects, stored in a cupboard, and labelled 'Lockerby Water.'

The Lockerby Penny is not, however, without a rival on the Borders. From time out of mind, the family of T., of Hume-byers, have possessed a charm called the 'Black Penny;' it is said to be somewhat larger than a penny, and is probably a Roman coin or medal. When any cattle are afflicted with madness, the Black Penny is dipped in a well the water of which runs towards the south (this is indispensable); sufficient water is then drawn and given to the animals affected. Popular belief still formally upholds the value of this remedy.

The waters of Loch Monar, a secluded lake near the Strath in the Highlands, claim to have a healing power of a somewhat similar character. Tradition avers that a woman who came from Ross-shire to live at Strathnaver, possessed certain holy or charmed pebbles, which when put into water imparted to it the power of curing disease. One day, when she was walking out, a man assaulted her, and tried to rob her of the stones; but she escaped from his hands, ran towards the lake, and exclaiming, in Gaelic, 'Mo nar shaine,' flung the pebbles into the water; the lake was forthwith endowed with marvellous powers of healing, put forth especially on the first Mondays in February, May, August, and November. During February and November, however, it remains unvisited, probably on account of the severity of the season; but the Rev. D. Mackenzie, minister of Farr, attests that in May and August multitudes of people make pilgrimages to the Loch from Sutherland, Caithness, Ross-shire, and even from Inverness and the Orkneys. The votaries must be on the banks of the Loch at midnight, plunge thrice into the waters, drink a small quantity, and throw a coin into the lake as a tribute to its presiding genius. They sedulously get out of sight of the Loch before sunrise, else they

consider that their labour will all have been in vain.[1]

Dr. Mitchell states, in the pamphlet already quoted, that in Lewis the diseases of cattle are attributed to the bite of serpents, and that the suffering animals are made to drink water into which charm-stones are put. He does not describe these stones, but says that he has presented two, recently in use, to the Museum of Antiquities; they have been more resorted to for the disease of cattle than of men. 'Burbeck's Bone,' however—a tablet of ivory, long preserved in the family of Campbell of Burbeck—was esteemed a sovereign cure for lunacy; when borrowed, a deposit of £100 was exacted, in order to secure its safe return.

In the neighbourhood of Stamfordham, Irish stones are the favourite charms. The Rev. J. F. Bigge informs me that he knows of three, all in high estimation. A servant of Mrs. ——, of Kyloe House, related to him how he was once sent to the house of a neighbouring lady to borrow such a stone. It had been brought from Ireland, and was never permitted to touch English soil. The stone was placed in a basket, carried to a patient with a sore leg, the leg rubbed with it, and the wound healed. People came many miles to be touched with these stones, but they were considered more efficacious in the hands of an Irish person. We learn from Mr. Denham's Notes that Irish stones were at one time common in the Northumbrian dales, and in high repute as a charm to keep frogs, snakes, and other vermin from entering the possessor's house. Evidently the blessing bestowed by St. Patrick upon the Emerald Isle was supposed to dwell in its very stones. Mr. Denham describes one of these stones, which belonged to Mr. Thomas Hedley, son to a

[1] From 'Two Months in the Highlands,' by C. R. Weld.

gentleman of the same name, at Woolaw, in Redesdale. It was of a pale-blue colour, three-and-a-quarter inches in diameter, and three-quarters of an inch thick. It is not perforated, and therein differs from the holy or self-bored stones of the North.[1]

A curious aid to the rearing of cattle came lately to the knowledge of Mr. G. W——, a gentleman of the city of Durham. During an excursion of a few miles into the country, he observed a sort of rigging attached to the chimney of a farmhouse well known to him, and asked what it meant. The good wife told him that they had experienced great difficulty that year in rearing their calves; the poor little creatures all died off, so that they had taken the leg and thigh of one of the dead calves, and hung it in a chimney by a rope, since which they had not lost another calf.[2]

It is strange to find the custom of lighting 'need-

[1] As to this later description of stone, however, we often come across it in the folk lore of the whole of England. Self-bored stones are considered charms against witchcraft, and they keep away nightmare both from man and beast. They are therefore suspended at the head of the bed as well as in stables. I have heard of this belief in the North of England, and also in Suffolk and in Cornwall.

[2] I have often observed in the Weald of Sussex dead horses or calves hung up by the four legs to the horizontal branch of a tree. It is a sufficiently ghastly sight. A magnificent elm in Westmeston, just under the Ditchling Beacon, was constantly loaded with dead animals: one spring I saw two horses and three calves. I never could ascertain the reason of this strange custom; further than that it was thought lucky for the cattle. I have no doubt myself that they were a sacrifice to Odin, hanging being the manner in which offerings were made to him. Odin himself on one occasion is said to have hung between heaven and earth. It was customary for the ancient Germanic tribes to hang upon trees the heads of the horses which had been killed in battle, as offerings to the god. When Cæcina visited the scene of Varian's overthrow (A.D. 15), he saw horses' heads hanging to the trees in the neighbourhood of the altars, where the Roman tribunes and centurions had been slaughtered.—S. B. G.

fires,' on the occasion of epidemics among cattle, still lingering among us, but so it is. The Vicar of Stamfordham writes thus respecting it: 'When the murrain broke out among the cattle about eighteen years ago, this fire was produced by rubbing two pieces of dry wood together, and was carried from place to place all through this district, as a charm against cattle taking the disease. Bonfires were kindled with it, and the cattle driven into the smoke, where they were kept for some time. Many farmers hereabouts, I am informed, had the need-fire.' And Mr. Denham relates that his father, who died A.D. 1843, in his 79th year, perfectly remembered a great number of persons, belonging to the upper and middle classes, from his native parish of Bowes, assembling on the banks of the River Greta to work for need-fire, a murrain among cattle being then prevalent in that part of Yorkshire. The fire was produced by the violent and continuous friction of two pieces of wood; and if cattle passed through the smoke thus raised, their cure was looked upon as certain.

The north-country proverb, 'to work as if working for need-fire,' shows how prevalent this custom has been in the Border counties, as in Scotland. That it is of very ancient origin, and widely spread, Mr. Kelly shows.[1] Originally, the mystic fire was originated by the friction of a wooden axle in the nave of a waggon-wheel, all the fires in the adjacent houses having been previously extinguished. Every household furnished its quota of straw, heath, and brushwood for fuel, laying it down altogether in some part of a narrow lane. When the fire thus made was burned down sufficiently, the cattle were all forcibly driven through it, two or three times, in order, beginning with the swine,

[1] Indo-European Tradition, p. 48.

and ending with the horses, or *vice versâ* Then each householder took home an extinguished brand, which, in some districts, was placed in the manger; and, finally, the ashes were scattered to the winds, that their health-giving influence might be spread far and near. It is on record also that a heifer has been sacrificed on this occasion.

In the fire-giving wheel Mr. Kelly sees an emblem of the sun, and in the whole ceremonies of the need-fire the remains of an ancient and solemn religious rite, handed down from early pagan times.

Some of the above narrations make mention of charms uttered over a wounded or diseased part of the body, but I have not been able to learn the words spoken. Two charms have, however, been sent me from the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, in Devonshire, where they are held in high esteem. The first was repeated over the upper nurse in the family of the then Vicar of North Bovey, after a hurt by a fish-bone, in September 1860, and has the credit of curing her:

'When our Lord Jesus Christ was upon earth, He pricked himself with a [*here name the cause of the injury*], and the blood sprang up to heaven. Yet His flesh did neither canker, mould, rot, nor corrupt; no more shall thine. I put my trust in God. In the name, &c.'— Say these words thrice, and the Lord's Prayer once.

TO STOP BLEEDING.

Our Saviour Christ was born in Bethlehem,
And was baptised in the river of Jordan;
The waters were mild of mood,
The Child was meek, gentle, and good,
He struck it with a rod and still it stood,
And so shall thy blood stand,
In the name, &c.

Say these words thrice, and the Lord's Prayer once.[1]

It would be interesting to compare these lines with those used under similar circumstances in the North of England. But there is always a difficulty in drawing

[1] I obtained the following charm from the neck of a dead man at Hurstpierpoint, and give it in the original spelling :—

'When Jesus Christ came upon the Cross for the redemption of mankind, He shook, and His Rood trembled. The Cheaf Preast said unto Him, Art thou afraid, or as thou an ague? He said unto them, I am not afraid, neither have I an ague, and whosoever Believeth in these words shall not be troubled with anney Feaver or ague. So be it unto you.

HENRY WICKHAM.'

I have found a very similar charm written out, and dated 1708, in an old copy of Gould's Poems, but I do not know to what county it belongs: 'When Jesus went up to the Cross to be crucified, the Jews asked Him, saying, Art Thou afraid, or hast Thou the ague? Jesus answered and said, I am not afraid, neither have I the ague. All those which bear the name of Jesus about them shall not be afraid, nor yet have the ague. Amen, sweet Jesus! Amen, sweet Jehovah! Amen, amen!'

Compare with these the following German charms :—

A CHARM FOR EASY DELIVERANCE.

Thus said Christ: I received 102 blows on the mouth from the Jews in the Court, and 30 times was I struck in the garden. I was beaten on head, arm, and breast 40 times, on shoulders and legs 30 times; 30 times was my hair plucked, and I sighed 127 times. My beard was pulled 72 times, and I was scourged with 6,666 strokes. A thousand blows were rained on my head with the reed, smiting the thorny crown. Seventy-three times was I spat in the face, and I had in my body 5,475 wounds. From my body flowed 30,430 blood drops. All who daily say seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Maries, till they have made up the number of my blood drops, shall be relieved of pain in childbirth.

A CHARM AGAINST STORMS.

Jesus, King of Glory, is come in peace + God is made man + Christ is born of a Virgin + Christ has suffered + Christ has been crucified + Christ has died + Christ arose + Christ ascended + Christ conquers and rules + Christ stands between me and thunder and lightning + He passed

from a northern his little superstitions ; he is too reticent. We may mention here that this sort of charm is much used in Prussia by persons of a higher station in life than those who resort to them in any part of England. A friend informs me that in a family at Berlin, of more than average education and cultivation of mind, she has heard a lady blamed for persisting in consulting the doctor for chronic rheumatism in the arm, instead of having the limb '*besprochen.*'

In the North of England, at any rate, charms and spells are not, however, all spent upon the sick and wounded. Witness the following dialogue between two servant-girls in the city of Durham, communicated to me by the Rev. James Raine. One of them, it seems, peeped out of curiosity into the box of her fellow-servant, and was astonished to find there the end of a tallow-candle stuck through and through with pins. 'What's that, Molly,' said Bessie, 'that I see'd i' thy box?' 'Oh,' said Molly, 'it's to bring my sweetheart. Thou see'st, sometimes he's slow a-coming, and if I stick a candle-end full o' pins it always fetches him.' A member of the family certifies that John was thus duly fetched from Ferryhill, a distance of six miles, and pretty often too.

It is remarkable that a somewhat similar use of candles and pins prevailed in the remote county of

through them unhurt + Holy God + Holy strong God + Holy undying God + Have mercy !

A CHARM FOR CATTLE.

Our Lord Jesus Christ went over the land
With His staff in His hand,
The Holy Ghost in His mouth,
In the name, &c.

And the sign of the cross is made nine times over the cattle.—S. B. G.

Buckingham at no very distant date. My friend Miss Y—— has given me the following particulars on the subject, which she learned from her nurse, an old servant still in the family. Buckinghamshire damsels desirous to see their lovers would stick two pins across through the candle they were burning, taking care that the pins passed through the wick. While doing this they recited the following verse:—

> It 's not this candle alone I stick,
> But A. B.'s heart I mean to prick;
> Whether he be asleep or awake,
> I'd have him come to me and speak.

By the time the candle burned down to the pins and went out, the lover would be certain to present himself.

The nurse declared that she knew three instances in which this spell had been practised, and that successfully, so far as the appearance of the lover was concerned; but only one of the girls was married to the man in question, and her after-life was most unhappy. Of the other two, one lost her sweetheart immediately. He came to her that evening because he could not help himself, but he came in a very ill-humour, declaring that he knew the girl 'had been about some devilment or other.' 'No tongue,' he said, 'could tell what she had made him suffer,' and he never would have another word to say to her from that hour.

It is interesting to compare this history with the following, from the neighbourhood of the Hartz Mountains. In that district girls obtain a glimpse of their future husbands in the following manner. At nightfall a maiden must shut herself up in her sleeping-room, take off all her clothes, and place upon a table, covered with a white cloth, two beakers, the one filled with wine,

the other with pure water. She must then repeat the following words:—

My dear St. Andrew,
Let now appear before me
My heart's beloved;
If he shall be rich,
He will pour a cup of wine;
If he shall be poor,
Let him pour a cup of water.

This done, the form of the future husband will appear, and drink from one of the cups. If poor he will sip the water, if rich the wine.

An over-curious maiden once summoned her future husband in this manner. Precisely as the clock struck twelve he appeared, drank from the wine-cup, laid a three-edged dagger on the table, and vanished. The girl put the dagger in her trunk. Some years afterwards a man arrived in that place from a distant part of the country, bought property there, saw the girl, and married her. It was the same whose form had appeared to her that night. After a time he chanced to open his wife's trunk, and there beheld the dagger. At the sight of it he became furious. 'Thou, then, art the woman,' he exclaimed, 'who, years ago, forced me to come hither from afar in the night, and it was no dream! Die, therefore!' and with these words he thrust the dagger in her heart.[1]

A variation of this spell extends into Yorkshire, and was thus practised by a young woman at Wakefield, not long ago. She obtained the bladebone of a shoulder of mutton, and into its thinnest part drove a new penknife; then she went secretly into the garden, and buried knife and bone together, firmly believing that so long

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 144.

as they were in the ground her betrothed would be in a state of uneasiness, which would gradually increase till he would be compelled to visit her. In this case his powers of endurance were not very great, for he arrived the next day, saying how wretched and miserable he had been ever since yesterday. The girl was thus firmly convinced of the potency of the spell, but, at the same time, she had been so uncomfortable while practising it, and her conscience pricked her so sharply for the sufferings she had inflicted on her lover, that she determined never to have recourse to it again.

But this is not all. Local superstition interferes in a yet more delicate matter—the quarrels of husband and wife—as the following narration shows, which was communicated to me by my kind neighbour and friend, Mrs. W.:—

About the year 1825, there lived at Bothal, in Cumberland, a farmer named Billy Briscoe, who had married a widow, and a wealthy one for that part of the country, since her fortune was £60 a year. But, unfortunately, she had also a strong will and high temper; and as his were of the same character, the match did not prove a happy one. The ill-assorted couple were always quarrelling. If anything went amiss in the house or the farm, the husband at once threw the blame on his wife, who for her part was never at a loss for an angry retort.

Things had gone on for some time in this wretched way, when in despair the husband applied to a wise woman for a charm, to protect him from his wife's evil eye; and on receipt of a guinea she gave him two pieces of paper, each about three inches square, closely covered with writing, directing that one piece should be sewn inside his waistcoat, and the other fastened within the cupboard door. This was done, and the change that ensued

was wonderful. All was peace and goodwill. The cat and dog were transformed into a pair of turtledoves.

But the harmony was, unhappily, of no long duration. After a few months the waistcoat was thoughtlessly popped into the washtub, and the charm disappeared among the suds, while about the same time its counterpart was swept off the cupboard door during a grand house-cleaning. The spell was broken; peace was over, and the home more miserable than ever. The unhappy wife told all this to my informant, who, as a last resource, asked her why she did not go back to her own friends, since she could not make her husband happy. 'I've thought of that,' she replied; 'but my money's here, and how could I go away and leave other people to eat my meat?'

## CHAPTER VI.

### WITCHCRAFT.

In the Borders—Drawing Blood above the Mouth—Witches in Dairies—Elf-shooting—Witchcraft in Sunderland—Changelings—The Blacksmith's Wife of Yarrowfoot—The Miller of Holdean—Ronaldson of Bowden—The Farmer's Wife of Deloraine—Hairtethers—Laird Harry Gilles and the Hare—Yorkshire Tales—Cats and Witches—Auld Nan Hardwick—Nannie Scott—The Wise Man of Stokesley—Willie Dawton—Black Jock—Black Willie—Rowan Wood—Holly—Bracken—Broom, &c.—Pins—Recovery of Stolen Property—The Key and Bible—Sieve and Shears—The Hand of Glory.

WITCHCRAFT undoubtedly lies at the root of many of the practices recorded in the last chapter, but we must now deal with it more directly. The belief in this evil power, once universal throughout Christendom, took deep hold of the Borderland, especially of the Scottish portion of it. It is curious to observe how Mr. Wilkie speaks of witches, as though they were recognised members of society, to be met and spoken with every day. Thus, he begins abruptly: 'There is some difficulty in knowing how to act when a witch offers to shake hands with us. No doubt there is some risk in accepting the courtesy, since the action entails on us all the ill she may wish us. Still it ensures us equally all the good she may wish us, and therefore it seems a pity to refuse one's hand. It is, however, unlucky to be praised by a witch, or indeed to hold any conversation with her, and our only safety against sudden death soon after consists in having the last word. Hence the old phrase, "Some witch or other has shaken hands wi' him, *and gotten the last word.*" Should you receive

money from a witch, put it at once into your mouth, for fear the donor should spirit it away, and supply its place with a round stone or slate, which otherwise she might do at pleasure. Accordingly, it may be observed that old people constantly put into their mouths the money which is paid them.'

To draw blood above the mouth from the person who has caused any witchery is the accredited mode of breaking the spell. The Rev. J. F. Bigge has recorded the following instance: A tenant of Sir Charles Monck, living at Belsay-bankfoot, had so many mischances that he felt no doubt his stock was bewitched. A cow broke her leg, a calf died, a horse got stuck, and so on. Who was his enemy? At last he settled that it must be a new servant of his own, quite a young lad, and by the advice of a skilled person he determined to break the spell, by drawing blood above the wizard's mouth. So at foddering-time the farmer purposely quarrelled with the poor lad about some trifle, and flying upon him, scratched his face and made his nose bleed. The plan was considered quite a success, for no further misfortune happened to the stock.

A story which has been communicated to me from Cheriton Bishop, a village ten miles from Exeter, corresponds singularly with this Northumbrian tale. A belief in witchcraft still holds its ground in that part of Devonshire. Not many years ago a young girl in delicate health was thought to have been bewitched by an old woman of the place, and all declared that the only cure for her would be an application of the witch's blood. The girl's friends, therefore, laid wait for the poor old woman, seized her when she was alone and unprotected, scratched her with a nail till the blood flowed, and collected the blood. They carried it home, and smeared the

sick girl with it, and the recovery, which took place in course of time, was attributed to this application.[1]

There are still plenty of white witches in Devonshire, but one died a few years ago in the village of Bovey Tracey, who, unless she were greatly maligned, by no means deserved so favourable a designation. She was accused of 'overlooking' her neighbours' pigs, so that her son, if ever betrayed into a quarrel with her, used always to say before they parted, 'Mother, mother, spare my pigs.' This son, a farm-labourer living in the adjoining parish of Hennock, came to a very remarkable end. While leading a cart through the River Teign, he stopped to rest his horse; and while arranging something about the cart, it turned over upon him, so that he was imprisoned in the water and drowned. Neighbours remembered that he had 'had words' with his mother, when last they met, and were not slow in laying his death to her charge. But the most awful story about her is as follows. A man went to her asking for help, to get rid of an enemy. The witch gave him a candle, and told him to take it into a secret place, light it, and watch it while it was burning. So long as it burned, his enemy would be in flames; when it expired he would die, which, said my informant, came to pass.[2]

[1] Note that this is the case with werewolves also. In Brittany, if the lycanthropist be scratched above the nose, so that three blood drops are extracted, the charm is broken. In Germany the werewolf has to be stabbed with knife or pitchfork thrice on the brows before it can be disenchanted.—S. B. G.

[2] At Hurstpierpoint there is a cottage in which lived a witch, of whom it was said she could not die till she had sold her secret. Her end was dreadful. She was dying for weeks. At last an old man from Cuckfield Workhouse paid a halfpenny for the secret, and she died with the money in her hand. A blue flame appeared on the roof as she breathed her last.

The mother of a man whom I know was struck dumb by this witch.

One of the most common misdeeds of witches is to hinder the dairymaid in butter-making. When the butter fails to come in the churn as usual, it is at once set down as bewitched, and, curiously enough, this belief extends to Devonshire, though butter is there made without churning. A gentleman of that county informs me that he perfectly remembers how, when he was a child, the dairymaid would run to his mother and say, 'Please, ma'am, to send somebody else to make the butter; I've been stirring the cream ever so long, and the butter won't come, and I know it's bewitched.' In Lancashire the witch is driven away by putting a hot iron into the churn, in Northumberland by popping in a crooked sixpence. In Cleveland they keep her off thus. Before churning take a pinch of salt, and throw it into the churn; then a second pinch, and throw it into the fire, and so on, nine times each way. Your butter will then come without fail.

The following story was told to the Rev. George Ornsby, by an old man who used to work in the vicarage garden at Fishlake. A few years ago the old man was applied to by the tailor of the neighbouring village for two small branches from a mountain ash, which grew in his garden. Enquiry being made why they were wanted, the applicant stated that his wife had been churning for hours, and yet no butter would come; that they believed the cream was bewitched; and that they had

The hag was wont to mumble as she walked along, and this woman asked her one day what curses she was muttering, whereupon she was struck dumb. At the end of three months the relations interfered, and persuaded the old woman to take off the charm. So she told her victim to walk to Sevenoaks, in Kent, where at the park-gate she would meet a man in black, and then and there recover her speech, which accordingly came to pass. I have heard this story corroborated by several persons. —S. B. G.

heard say, that if the cream were stirred with one twig of mountain ash, and the cow beaten with the other, the charm would be broken, and the butter come without delay.

On the Borders, if you suspect a woman of bewitching your cow and hindering the butter from coming, order the dairymaid to press down the churn-staff to the bottom of the churn, and keep it there. The witch will be drawn to your house, enter it, and sit down without power to rise. Now you are mistress of the occasion. Tax her with her guilt, and make her promise to let your butter come. This done, you may permit her to rise and go away, which she will do at once, making many protestations of innocence. In North Germany, too, they believe that if the butter does not come the dairy is bewitched, but the remedy there is to smoke the cows, churns, and pails, in secret and at nightfall. This will bring the witch to the door, asking admittance, but she must on no account be let in.[1]

[1] See Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 64.—At Bratton-Clovelly, in Devonshire, a farmer's cows were charmed, so that his milk yielded neither cream nor butter. He declared on oath that he had put whole faggots on the fire, but the milk would not boil, a proof that it was bewitched. He therefore resorted to the white witch at Exeter, who advised him to make a fire with sticks gathered out of four parishes, and set the milk upon them. The witch would thereupon look in at the door or window, and the charm would be broken. The man did as ordered, collecting wood from the parishes of Lewtrenchard, Germansweek, Broadwood Wigger, and Thurshelton. As soon as the milk was placed on the fire thus made, it boiled over; the witch peeped in at the window and muttered something, then went away, and the charm was broken.— S. B. G.

It is curious to trace something analogous in Swedish folk-lore. If on Midsummer Eve nine kinds of wood are collected, and formed into a pile and kindled, and some witch's butter cast upon it, or if the fire be only beaten with nine kinds of wood, witches are forced to come forward and discover themselves.—(Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 106.)

The difficulty in churning milk, however, proceeds most commonly from the cow having been struck by an elf-stone, while grazing in the field. However much the poor creature may suffer from the wound, no human eye will see it till she has been rubbed all over with the blue bonnet belonging to the chief of the family, or to some very aged man. The wound, or its scar, if the mischief be of old date, will then be plainly seen.

The elf-stone is described as sharp, and with many corners and points, so that whichever way it falls, it inflicts a wound on the animal it touches. Popular belief maintains that the elves received these stones from old fairies, who wore them as breastpins at the fairy court, and that the old fairies received them in turn from mermaidens. Such is Mr. Wilkie's account of the matter. Doubtless they are really the flint arrow-heads of our ancestors. Mr. Denham maintains this, and describes them as formed of flint about an inch long and half an inch broad. Irish peasants wear them about their necks, set in silver, as an amulet against elf-shooting. He adds that the disease, said to be produced by an elf-shot, consists really in an over-distension of the cow's first stomach, from eating to excess clover and grass with the morning dew upon it. Mention is made of elf-stones in the confession of Isabel Gowdie, who was tried for witchcraft in April 1662, and afterwards executed. She declared that the elves formed them from the rough flint, the archfiend himself perfecting or 'dighting' them; and she gave the names of many persons, whom she and her comrades had slain with them, stating that whoever failed to bless himself when the little whirlwind passed which

accompanied their locomotion, fell under their power, and they had the right of shooting at him.[1]

Mr. Wilkie records that a few years ago a ploughman in Ettrick Forest was said to have obtained an elf-stone thus. While ploughing a field, he heard a whizzing sound in the air, and looking up perceived a stone aimed at one of his horses. He drove on, and it fell by the animal's side. He stopped and picked up the stone, but found its angles so sharp that they cut his hand as it lay there, though the weight of the stone was only one ounce troy.

The belief in elf-shooting extends, or has extended, from the Shetland Islands to Cornwall.[2] In the Shetland Islands a charm is repeated over the wounded creature, while a sewing needle, wrapped in a leaf of the Psalter, is fastened into some part of her hair. Elsewhere the cow was made to drink water in which an elf-stone had been washed. Another mode of relief, called the 'ordeal of blood,' is prescribed in Scotland. Take some of the injured animal's blood, mix with it a

[1] Scott's Demonology, Letter V.

[2] Elf-shooting is, in fact, an ancient Scandinavian superstition. In the 'Bandamanna Saga,' an Icelandic account of a law-feud in the 11th century, occurs the following passage: 'That same autumn, Hermund gathered a party and went along the Hvrammstrack on his way to Borg, intending to burn down the house with Egil in it. Now, as they came out under Volfell, they heard the chime of a bowstring up in the fell; and at the moment Hermund felt ill, and a sharp pain under his arms, so that they had to turn about, and the sickness gained on him. When they reached Thorgautsstede, they had to lift him down from his horse, and they sent after the priest at Sidumuli. When he arrived, Hermund could not speak, and the priest remained with him. After awhile his lips moved, and the priest bending over him heard him say, 'Two hundred in the gill! Two hundred in the gill!' and so muttering he died. (Bandamanna Saga, p. 41). This is one of the earliest accounts of an elf-shot I know. In the old Norse ballad of Sir Olaf, the Ellmaid strikes the hunter on the heart and he dies.—S. B. G.

quantity of pins, and boil it, taking care to stir it as soon as it begins to boil. The door must be carefully locked, and everyone kept out of the secret, except the members of the family. Presently the witch who has done the evil will come to the house-door, and ask to be let in; but you must take care not to admit her, for if she enters she will murder everyone concerned in the ordeal. Instead of opening the door, you must insist on her promising to take off the spell, after which you may admit her freely.

The following account of elf-shooting in County Derry is furnished by my Irish correspondent. The elves, she says, are considered bad jealous sprites, who envy the peasants all their little comforts, and especially their rough mountain cows, with the milk and butter they yield. Therefore the elves delight to injure the milch-cows. At dead of night, it is firmly believed, will an elf often enter the byre, and shoot a small sharp stone, rather bigger than a pea, under and behind the left shoulder of the cow. Next morning the owner finds his cow lying down, breathing heavily, with the sweat running down its eyes and nose from pain, and he knows she has been elf-shot. So off he goes for the old man of the county who is skilled in healing cows. The old man comes 'travelling' (*i.e.* on foot), it may be, many miles, and all are awed in his presence. He clears the room and makes his preparations. In a new clean pot he boils a pound of gunpowder and a crooked sixpence in a pint of water, and then carries the mixture to the byre and places it before the cow. She drinks it at once, well knowing it is her only hope of cure. The gunpowder immediately blows the elf-stone out again through the hole under the shoulder, and the sixpence, fitting on the heart, covers the wound made there by the stone. The

doctor returns into the house with the stone in his hand, to be well praised and well paid. Should anyone present indulge in impertinent doubts, he will take care to keep them to himself, for fear his cows should be 'blinked' by the skilled man, and everybody believes in blinking. This is casting an evil eye on a cow, a less evil certainly than elf-shooting, because it is a human, not a spirit curse, but still troublesome, since the old man must be summoned and paid. When a cow has been blinked, the old man cures her by muttering a charm over her, making the sign of the cross over her back and down each leg, and pouring down her throat a compound of epsom-salts, castor-oil, saltpetre, and sulphur. It is useless to argue against these superstitions. If after the skilled man's treatment for elf-shooting the cow *will* not recover, she dies because God chooses it, and not from the elf-shot.

When a child pines or wastes away, the cause is commonly looked for in witchcraft or the 'evil eye.' At Stamfordham a sickly puny child is set down as 'heart-grown' or bewitched, and is treated as follows. Before sunrise it is brought to a blacksmith of the seventh generation, and laid naked on the anvil. The smith raises his hammer, as if he were about to strike hot iron, but brings it down gently on the child's body. This is done three times, and the child is sure to thrive from that day.

In the North-west of Scotland, according to Dr. Mitchell, the 'gold and silver water' is the accredited cure for a child suffering from an evil eye. A shilling and a sovereign are put into water, which is then sprinkled over the patient in the name of the Trinity.

An eminent physician of Sunderland, the late Dr. Johnson, wrote to me thus respecting a little sufferer

of that town, only four days before his own death: A case of necromancy occurred in this town some months ago. A child about eighteen months old, belonging to a working-man at Southwick, was suffering from the wasting which accompanies scrofulous disease of the bowels, and presented the withered, haggard, weird appearance attributed to those smitten by the witch's evil eye, or to the fairies' changelings. The parents firmly believed the former to be the case, and sought counsel of a reputed charmer (Irish, I think) yet living in this town. He told them to come at midnight with the child to a room occupied by himself; and there a magic circle was drawn, lighted by candles placed round the circumference, and ornamented by chalk drawings, supposed by the people to be representations of planets. He took the naked child in his arms, stepped within the circle, repeated something (alleged to be the Lord's Prayer backwards) three times over, anointed the breast and forehead of the child with some mysterious unguent, waved a magic wand over its head, addressed a sort of patron angel or imp in its behalf, and then pronounced the child whole and taken from under the evil spell. I find that a part of this superstition refers to a belief that the parents of sick children employ the "evil eye" to transfer the disease from their own to other children, as well as to gratify malice or revenge. Within the last month a charge was seriously preferred against an elderly female for bewitching a child, about whom I was consulted; and there seemed to be a floating belief in the minds of the parents that the "evil eye" had been cast upon it, not only because the witch had quarrelled with the father, but because, her own pigs being unhealthy, she had sought to transfer the sickness from her own stye to her neighbour's nursery.'

Even in our own country, it appears that the fairies share with the witches the odium of molesting our nurseries. In the Western Islands idiots are believed to be without doubt changelings of the fairies. Dr. Mitchell knew of three such cases, and he records the only means of redress there open to the parents. If they place the changeling on the beach, below highwater-mark, when the tide is out, and pay no heed to its screams, the fairies, rather than suffer their offspring to be drowned by the rising waters, will convey it away and restore the child they had stolen. The sign that this has been effected is the cessation of the child's crying.

Danish folk-lore speaks much of these changelings, which the underground folk substitute for human children before their baptism, if the lights are extinguished in the lying-in chamber. Once, the room being darkened to give the mother sleep, and the baby considered safe in its father's arms, he dozed off for a few minutes, and awoke with a child in each arm and a tall woman standing before him. The woman vanished, and he was left in terrible perplexity as to which was his own child. By the advice of the priest, the two infants were laid upon the ground, and a wild stallion colt led up to them. The creature licked the one but snorted at the other, and strove to kick it, on which a tall woman appeared, caught up the false child, and ran away with it.

Two methods of getting rid of such changelings are recorded. One mother, who was greatly distressed at the loss of her own child and the substitution of a puny wretched creature, at length heated her oven very hot, and having instructed her servant-maid to ask, in a very loud voice, 'Why do you heat the oven so hot, mistress?' replied, 'I am going to burn my child.' The question was asked and answered three times; then she took the

changeling and put it on the peel, as if to thrust it in the oven. At this moment the underground woman rushed in, took her child from the peel, and returned the other, saying, 'There is your child! I have done by it better than you have by mine.' And, in fact, the baby was thriving and strong. In the other case a pudding was made of pork, with skin, hair, and all mixed up in it. When this was placed before the changeling he exclaimed, as he eyed it for some time, 'Pudding with hide and pudding with hair, pudding with eyes and pudding with bones in it. Thrice have I seen a young wood spring up on Tiis lake, but never before did I see such a pudding! The fiend will stay here no longer!' So saying, he turned and went away. In each instance it is specified that the change of children was effected because the parents had been negligent in bringing the infants to be christened.[1]

But to return to witchcraft proper. The Wilkie MS. is rich in stories on this subject. Witches and warlocks, it seems, are wont to kindle their fires in deep glens, on the wildest moors, or on the tops of high hills, there to dance or sit in a ring, and hold converse while they devour the plunder of rifled graves with the choicest wines from their neighbours' cellars. Now, some years back, the blacksmith of Yarrowfoot had for apprentices two brothers, both steady lads, and, when bound to him, fine healthy fellows. After a few months, however, the younger of the two began to grow pale and lean, lose his appetite, and show other marks of declining health. His brother, much concerned, often questioned him as to what ailed him, but to no purpose. At last, however, the poor lad burst into an agony of tears, and confessed that he was quite worn-out, and should soon be

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. pp. 174-176.

brought to the grave through the illusage of his mistress, who was in truth a witch, though none suspected it. 'Every night' he sobbed out, 'she comes to my bedside, puts a magic bridle on me, and changes me into a horse. Then, seated on my back, she urges me on for many a mile to the wild moors, where she and I know not what other vile creatures hold their hideous feasts. There she keeps me all night, and at early morning I carry her home. She takes off my bridle, and there I am, but so weary I can ill stand. And thus I pass my nights while you are soundly sleeping.'

The elder brother at once declared he would take his chance of a night among the witches, so he put the younger one in his own place next the wall, and lay awake himself till the usual time of the witch-woman's arrival. She came, bridle in hand, and flinging it over the elder brother's head, up sprang a fine hunting horse. The lady leaped on his back, and started for the trysting-place, which on this occasion, as it chanced, was the cellar of a neighbouring laird.

While she and the rest of the vile crew were regaling themselves with claret and sack, the hunter, who was left in a spare stall of the stable, rubbed and rubbed his head against the wall till he loosened the bridle, and finally got it off, on which he recovered his human form. Holding the bridle firmly in his hand he concealed himself at the back of the stall till his mistress came within reach, when in an instant he flung the magic bridle over her head, and, behold, a fine grey mare! He mounted her and dashed off, riding through hedge and ditch, till, looking down, he perceived she had lost a shoe from one of her forefeet. He took her to the first smithy that was open, had the shoe replaced, and a new one put on the other forefoot, and then rode

her up and down a ploughed field till she was nearly worn-out. At last he took her home, and pulled the bridle off just in time for her to creep into bed before her husband awoke, and got up for his day's work.

The honest blacksmith arose, little thinking what had been going on all night; but his wife complained of being very ill, almost dying, and begged him to send for a doctor. He accordingly aroused his apprentices; the elder one went out, and soon returned with one whom he had chanced to meet already abroad. The doctor wished to feel his patient's pulse, but she resolutely hid her hands, and refused to show them. The village Esculapius was perplexed; but the husband, impatient at her obstinacy, pulled off the bed-clothes, and found, to his horror, that horseshoes were tightly nailed to both hands! On further examination, her sides appeared galled with kicks, the same that the apprentice had given her during his ride up and down the ploughed field.

The brothers now came forward, and related all that had passed. On the following day the witch was tried by the magistrates of Selkirk, and condemned to be burned to death on a stone at the Bullsheugh, a sentence which was promptly carried into effect. It is added that the younger apprentice was at last restored to health by eating butter made from the milk of cows fed in kirk-yards, a sovereign remedy for consumption brought on through being witch-ridden.

A similar story is told in Iceland, and is translated in Powell's 'Legends of Iceland,' p. 85. It appears again in Belgium in the following form:—

At a large farm at Bollebeck dwelt a serving-man, who, though well-fed by the farmer's wife, grew thinner every day. His fellow-servants questioned him as to

the cause of this, but to no purpose, till at length the shepherd, who was his best friend, drew the following history from him. His mistress was a witch, and used to come at night to his bedside, throw a bridle over his head, turn him into a horse, and ride him about all night. 'This seems to me incredible,' said the shepherd; 'but let me lie in thy bed to-night. I should like to try the thing for once.' The man agreed, and the shepherd took his place in bed.

About ten o'clock the farmer's wife came in, and would have thrown the bridle over him, but the shepherd was too quick for her. He snatched it out of her hand and threw it over her, on which she was instantly changed into a mare. He rode her about the fields all night, then brought her home and led her to the farmer, saying, 'Master, there is a horsedealer in the village who wishes to dispose of this mare, and asks five hundred francs for her.' 'She is sold,' said the farmer; 'come in, and I will give thee the money.' 'But it's without the bridle,' said the shepherd; 'he requires to have that back.' 'Be it so,' said the farmer, laughing; 'the bargain stands.' He counted out the money, the shepherd pocketed it, then took off the bridle, and, behold! the woman stood before them. Shedding bitter tears, she fell at her husband's feet, promising never again to do the like, on which he forgave her, and the shepherd was bound over to secrecy.[1]

The Danish version of the story is slightly different. In it the victim is unconscious of the cause of his declining health and strength, till he learns it from a wise man. The wise man gave him an ointment to apply to his head at night. The tingling it produced awoke him, and, lo! he was standing outside Tron

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 235.

Church in Norway, with a bridle in his hand. He had torn it off in scratching his head. He flung the bridle over his mistress, transformed her into a handsome mare, rode her home, had four new shoes fastened on her, sold her to her husband; and taking off the bridle, there she stood, with horseshoes nailed to her hands and feet. The indignant husband turned her out-of-doors, and she never was able to free herself from the iron shoes.[1]

The next story relates how the miller of Holdean Mill, Berwickshire, received some uncannie visitants, of what precise nature it does not specify. It is to this effect. While the miller was drying a melder of oats, belonging to a neighbouring farmer, tired with the fatigues of the day, he threw himself down upon some straw in the kiln-barn, and soon fell fast asleep. After a time he was awakened by a confused noise, as if the killogee were full of people, all speaking together; on which he pulled aside the straw from the banks of the kiln, and, looking down, observed a number of feet and legs paddling among the ashes, as if enjoying the warmth from the scarcely extinguished fires. As he listened, he distinctly heard the words, 'What think ye o' my feeties?'—a second voice answering, 'An' what think ye o' mine?' Nothing daunted, though much astonished, the stout-hearted miller took up his 'beer mell,' a large wooden hammer, and threw it down among them, so that the ashes flew about; while he cried out with a loud voice, 'What think ye o' my meikle mell amang a' thae legs o' yourn?' A hideous rout at once emerged from the kiln amid yells and cries, which passed into wild laughter; and finally these words reached the miller's ears, sung in a mocking tone:

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 190.

Mount and fly for Rhymer's tower,
Ha, ha, ha, ha!
The pawky miller hath beguiled us,
Or we wud hae stown his luck
For this seven years to come,
And mickle water wud hae run
While the miller slept.

A man named Ronaldson, who lived at the village of Bowden, is reported to have had frequent encounters with the witches of that place. Among these we find the following. One morning at sunrise, while he was tying his garter with one foot against a low dyke, he was startled at feeling something like a rope of straw passed between his legs, and himself borne swiftly away upon it to a small brook at the foot of the southernmost hill of Eildon. Hearing a hoarse smothered laugh, he perceived he was in the power of witches or sprites; and when he came to a ford called the Brig-o'-stanes, feeling his foot touch a large stone, he exclaimed, 'I' the name o' the Lord, ye'se get me no farther!' At that moment the rope broke, the air rang as with the laughter of a thousand voices; and as he kept his footing on the stone, he heard a muttered cry, 'Ah, we've lost the coof!'

This adventure reminds us how the ancestor of the Duffus family was spirited away from his paternal fields, and found the next day at Paris, in the royal cellars, with a silver cup in his hand. In that case, however, the victim provoked his destiny by echoing the cry of 'Horse and hattock,' the elfin signal for mounting and riding off.

Witchcraft is not named in the next story, but we can scarcely be wrong in assuming it to be the agent at work in it. We must premise that it was, perhaps still is, customary in the Lowlands of Scotland, as in other

secluded districts, for tailors to leave their workshops and go into the farmhouses of the neighbourhood to work by the day. The farmer's wife of Deloraine thus engaged a tailor with his workmen and apprentices for the day, begging them to come in good time in the morning. They did so, and partook of the family breakfast of porridge and milk. During the meal, one of the apprentices observed that the milk-jug was almost empty, on which the mistress slipt out of the back-door with a basin in her hand to get a fresh supply. The lad's curiosity was roused, for he had heard there was no more milk in the house; so he crept after her, hid himself behind the door, and saw her turn a pin in the wall, on which a stream of pure milk flowed into the basin. She twirled the pin, and the milk stopped. Coming back, she presented the tailors with the bowl of milk, and they gladly washed down the rest of their porridge with it.

About noon, while our tailors were busily engaged with the gudeman's wardrobe, one of them complained of thirst, and wished for a bowl of milk like the morning's. 'Is that a'?' said the apprentice; 'ye'se get that.' The mistress was out of the way, so he left his work, found his way to the spot he had marked in the morning, twirled the pin, and quickly filled a basin. But, alas! he could not then stay the stream. Twist the pin as he would, the milk still continued to flow. He called the other lads, and implored them to come and help him; but they could only bring such tubs and buckets as they found in the kitchen, and these were soon filled. When the confusion was at its height, the mistress appeared among them, looking as black as thunder; while she called out, in a mocking voice, 'A'ye loons! ye hae drawn a' the milk fra every coo between

the head o' Yarrow an' the foot o't. This day ne'er a coo will gie her maister a drop o' milk, though he war gawing to starve.' The tailors slunk away abashed, and from that day forward the wives of Deloraine have fed their tailors on nothing but chappit 'taties and kale.[1]

Now it is clear from Kelly's Indo-European Traditions (p. 229), that witchcraft has always been potent in the dairy, and he accounts for it thus. The Aryan idea that the rain-clouds were the cows of heaven has been well preserved among the Northern nations. As Indra used to milk the cloud cows, and churn the milk-lakes and fountains with his thunderbolt, so did Thor with his axe. Our ancestors' mythology has passed into our own superstitions, and so witches of modern days draw milk from the handle of an axe stuck in a doorpost. We find a close parallel to the history of the wife of Deloraine at Caseburg, in North Germany, where a farmer who got no milk from his dairy, put the affair in the hands of a wise man, and the wise man detected the culprit in the person of a neighbour's wife. This woman had stuck a broom-handle into the wall of her own cow-house which was nearest to the farmer's dairy. To the handle she had hung a bucket, and was milking the broom-stick, which under her hands yielded a plentiful flow of milk.[2]

[1] In the curious old volume of sermons in German, by Dr. Johann Geyler von Keysersperg, entitled 'Die Emeis,' preached in Strasbourg A.D. 1508, and published in 1517, is a quaint woodcut of witches milking pump-handles, and a sermon on the iniquity of those old hags who thus drain their neighbours' cows of milk. That portion of the wife of Deloraine's story, concerning the inability of the apprentice to stop the milk, closely resembles the German tale of the magician and his pupil, which Göthe has versified in his 'Zauberlehrling.'—S. B. G.

[2] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 78.

The rich dairies of Holland and Belgium are not proof against such evil practices, but the means of redress are well known. They are as follows: 'When a sorceress has by her arts milked all the milk from a cow, the cow must soon afterwards be milked again. Let the milk thus obtained be set on the fire and made warm, and then beat with a stick till not a drop remains in the vessel. Any milk that flows over on the ground may also be beaten, for the more beating there is the better, since every stroke given to the milk is received by the sorceress on her back from the devil. It has often happened here (at Laeken) that sorceresses have been confined to their beds, for a week or more, from having been thus beaten.' One Dutch farmer, however, preferred actually administering the blows himself; so, observing one day an old witch go with a knife outside his dairy, turn to the moon, and repeat these words—

Here cut I a chip
In the dairy's wall,
And another thereto,
So take I the milk from this cow,

he took a thick rope, ran up to the sorceress and beat her well, exclaiming:

Here strike I a stroke,
And another as I may,
And a third thereto,
So keep I the milk with the cow.

And this, it is quaintly said, was the best method he could adopt.[1]

In Motherwell's preface to Henderson's Proverbs is a narration which bears on this part of our subject.

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 277.

The author says, that the ancestor of one of his neighbours in a Scottish village, going out early with his gun one May-day or Beltane morning, found two carlines long suspected of witchcraft, but never yet caught in the fact, brushing the May dew off the pasture-fields with a long hair tether. They fled at his approach, leaving behind them the instrument of their incantations, which he gathered up, carried home, and placed above the cow-house door. The consequence was that the next milking-time the dairymaids could not find pails to hold the supply of milk which the cows yielded, till the old gentleman took down and burnt the tether, after which things went on again in the usual way. There were a number of knots in the rope, every one of which went off like a pistol-shot when it was burnt. Mr. Kelly tells of a hair rope too, which in the hands of a witch would yield milk, adding that it must be made from the hair of different cows with a knot for each cow. The following verse was sung by way of incantation on such occasions:

> Meare's milk, and deer's milk,
> And every beast that bears milk,
> Between St. Johnston and Dundee,
> Come a' to me, come a' to me!

As to May dew, the belief in its virtue extends to Germany, or rather seems to have originated there, since the Germans have an appellation for a witch derived from her connection with it. They call her Daustriker (*Thaustreicher*), dew-striker or scraper. When the dew falls on May-morning, they say, it will be a good butter year. On such a morning a witch went out before sunrise into her neighbour's fields, took up the dew with large linen cloths, then wrung them out, and so collected the dew in a vessel. Afterwards,

every time she wished to make butter, she took a spoonful of it and poured it into the churn, saying at the same time, 'From every house a spoonful.' By this process she took on each occasion so much butter from every one of the owners of the fields she had swept of dew. Once, however, she left her man to churn, but not rightly understanding the matter, he blundered out, while taking the dew, 'From every house a bushelful;' so when he churned there came so much butter that it spread out over the whole house, and people were at a loss what to do with it.[1]

The German witches seem, indeed, to have been unremitting in their attacks on the dairy. 'There was a time when they were particularly mischievous. It was then indispensable for every housewife to have a handle made of the wood of the service (quicken) tree to her churn, else she could never be sure of getting butter. A man one morning early, on his way from Jägerup to Hadersleben, heard, as he passed by Woiensgaard, that they were churning in the yard; but at the same time he observed that a woman whom he knew was standing by the side of a running brook, and churning with a stick in the water. On that same day he saw her again selling a large lump of butter in Hadersleben. In the evening, as he again passed by Woiens, they were still churning; whereupon he went to the house, and assured them that their labour was all in vain, for the butter was already sold at Hadersleben.'[2]

According to Mr. Kelly, the proper antidote for witchcraft in the dairy is a twig of rowan-tree, bound with scarlet thread, or a stalk of clover with four leaves, laid in the byre. To discover the witch, the gudeman'

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 681.
[2] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 25.

breeks must be put upon the horns of the cow, one leg upon each horn, when she, being let loose, will for certain run straight to the door of the guilty person.

He also mentions a Scottish witch having been seen milking the cows in the shape of a hare, a creature closely connected with witchcraft since the memorable day when the prince of necromancers, Sir Michael Scott, was turned into a hare by the witch of Falsehope, and hunted by his own hounds, till, jaded and discomfited, he was fain to take refuge in his own jaw-hole (*anglicè*, common sewer). In fact, the cat and the hare are the two creatures into which the witch of modern days transforms herself when in extremity. Stories of cunning hares, defying all hounds and hunters, are to be found in every part of the country. That recorded by Mr. Wilkie is as follows:—

'The Laird (Harry Gilles) of Littledean was extremely fond of hunting. One day, as his dogs were chasing a hare, they suddenly stopped, and gave up the pursuit, which enraged him so much that he swore the animal they had been hunting must be one of the witches of Maxton. No sooner had he uttered the word than hares appeared all round him, so close that they even sprang over the saddle before his eyes, but still none of his hounds would give them chase. In a fit of anger, he jumped off his horse and killed the dogs on the spot, all but one large black hound, who at that moment turned to pursue the largest hare. Remounting his horse, he followed the chase, and saw the black hound turn the hare and drive it directly towards him. The hare made a spring as if to clear his horse's neck, but the laird dexterously caught hold of one of her fore-paws, drew out his hunting-knife, and cut it off; after which the hares, which had been so numerous, all

disappeared. Next morning Laird Harry heard that a woman of Maxton had lost her arm in some unaccountable manner; so he went straight to her house, pulled out the hare's foot (which had changed in his pocket to a woman's hand and arm), and applied it to the stump. It fitted exactly. She confessed her crime, and was drowned for witchcraft the same day in the well, by the young men of Maxton.'[1]

Mrs. Bray, Southey's correspondent, tells of a similar legend in Devonshire. The grandson of a witch at Tavistock was accustomed to get sixpences from a neighbouring huntsman by pointing out where he would find a hare, which hare was never caught. At last, measures were taken for a very vigorous chase; the hare was hard-pressed, and the boy was heard crying out, 'Run, granny—run for your life!' She did so, and just gained her cottage, where her pursuers found her panting and bleeding. The culprits were let off for that time with a whipping, but the old woman is said to have ended her days at the stake, a convicted witch.[2]

Through the Dales of Yorkshire we find hares still in the same mysterious relationship with witches. The Rev. J. C. Atkinson informs me that a new plantation having been made near Eskdale, great havoc was committed among the freshly-planted trees by hares. Many of these depredators were shot, but one hare seemed to bid defiance to shot and snare alike, and returned to the charge night after night. By the advice of a wise

[1] Nyauld (De la Lycanthropie, Paris, 1615) relates (p. 52), that in a village of Switzerland, near Lucerne, a peasant was once attacked by a wolf while he was hewing timber. He defended himself, and smote off the foreleg of the beast. The moment that the blood began to flow, the creature's foot changed, and he recognised in his enemy a woman of his acquaintance without her arm. She was burnt alive.—S. B. G.

[2] Traditions of Devon, vol. ii. p. 277.

man (I believe of the wise man of Stokesley, of whom more will be said by-and-by), recourse was had to silver shot, which was obtained by cutting up some small silver coin. The hare came again as usual, and was shot with the silver charge. At that moment an old lady who lived at some distance, but had always been considered somewhat uncannie, was busy tamming, *i. e.* roughly carding wool for her spinning. She suddenly flung up both hands, gave a wild shriek, and crying out, 'They have shot my familiar spirit,' fell down and died.

In another dale, he adds, higher up the course of the Esk, was a hare which baffled all the greyhounds that were slipped at her. They seemed to have no more chance with her than if they were coursing the wind. There was at the time a noted witch residing near, and her advice was asked about this wonderful hare. She seemed to have little to say about it, however, only she thought they had better let it be, and above all they must take care how they slipped a black dog at it. Nevertheless, either from recklessness or from distrust of their adviser, the party did go out coursing soon after with a black dog. The dog was slipped, and they perceived at once that the hare was at a disadvantage. She made as soon as possible for a stone wall, and attempted to escape through a 'smout' or sheephole at the bottom. Just as she reached it, the hound threw himself upon her and caught her in the haunch, but was unable to hold her. She got through, and was seen no more. The sportsmen, either in bravado or from terror of the consequences, went straight to the house of the witch to say what had happened. They found her in bed, hurt, she said, by a fall; but the wound looked very much as if it had been produced by the teeth of a dog, and it was on a part of the person corresponding to that by

which the hare had been seized before their eyes by the black hound. Whether this wise woman recovered from the effects of the accident, I do not know; but the Guisborough witch, who died within the memory of man, was lame for several years, in consequence, it was said, of a bite she received from a dog while slipping through the keyhole of her own door in the shape of a hare.

The witch of Hawkwell, in Northumberland, transformed herself into a hare, and the trap-hole in a door through which she used to bolt in when hard-pressed is still pointed out. A whin-stone on the roadside is also shown, melted down from her sitting on it. This witch used to show her spite by disabling the young horses that fed behind her cottage. In Sir W. Scott's 'Demonology and Witchcraft' (Letter IX.) we find the disenchanting rhyme, by virtue of which disguised witches could recover their own shape, if only they gained time to repeat it:

> Hare, hare, God send thee care!
> I am in a hare's likeness now,
> But I shall be a woman even now.
> Hare, hare, God send thee care!

In fact, the hare is the most common disguise of a witch in all the northern countries of Europe. Thorpe's Mythology[1] contains many instances, and there is one in which, by a strange caprice, the sorceress assumed the form of a toad. About the end of the sixteenth century, in West Flanders, a peasant had a quarrel with the landlady of the alehouse in which he had been drinking, and at last she uttered this threat: 'For this thou shalt not reach home to-night, or I'll never come back.' Accordingly, when he went down to the canal and got into his boat, he could not, with all his exertions, move it from the shore. In his distress, seeing some soldiers pass by, he

[1] Vol. iii. p. 278.

asked them to come and help him. They did so, but all in vain, till one of them proposed to throw out some things which were lying at the bottom of the boat. When these things were moved the men discovered beneath them an enormous toad, with eyes like glowing coals. One of the soldiers stabbed the reptile through the body and flung it into the water, and the others gave it several wounds in the belly as it floated by the boat upon its back. They tried again to move the boat, and now it glided off without any further trouble, which so pleased the peasant that he took the soldiers back to the alehouse for some refreshment. Asking for the landlady, they were told she was at the point of death, from wounds which could not be accounted for, since she had not left the house. On enquiry the wounds exactly corresponded with those inflicted on the reptile.

I do not know any other instance in which the witch assumes this loathsome shape, but the toad has ever figured largely in the records of superstition. It stands first in the horrible list of ingredients which the witches in Macbeth throw into their cauldron:

> Toad, that under coldest stone,
> Days and nights hast thirty-one,
> Sweltered venom sleeping got,
> Boil thou first i' the charmed pot!

Thus, again, in Middleton's play 'The Witch,' in the charm song, beginning

> Black spirits and white, red spirits and grey,
> Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may:

after the blood of a bat and libbard's bane, comes:—

> The juice of toad, the oil of adder,
> Those will make the younker madder.

And, to descend to modern times, the hind-leg of a

toad, dried, placed in a silk bag, and worn round the neck, is in Devonshire the common charm for the king's-evil. White witches and wise men supply these charms for a fee of five shillings. Sometimes they cut from the living reptile the part analogous to that in which the patient is suffering, bury the rest of the creature, wrap that part in parchment, and tie it round the patient's neck. A cure for rheumatism in the same county runs thus: burn a toad to powder, tie the dust in silk, and wear it round the throat.

In my next story the cat is the creature simulated by the witch. Like the hare, the cat mixes largely in the mythology of all the Indo-European nations. If the goddess Freya was attended by hares as her train-bearers and light-bearers, her chariot was drawn by cats. Perhaps these cats were originally tigers; perhaps Pussy's gleaming eyes and weatherwise propensities procured her the distinction, by inspiring belief in her supernatural powers. In the present instance, an honest Yorkshireman, who bred pigs, often lost his young ones. He therefore applied to the wise man of Stokesley, who told him they were bewitched by an old woman who lived near, and to whom my informant had long paid parochial relief. The owner of the pigs called to mind that he had often seen a cat, a suspicious-looking creature, prowling about his yard, and he jumped to the conclusion that this was the old woman in disguise. He watched for her, armed with a poker, and when she made her appearance flung it at her with all his force. The cat disappeared, and, curiously enough, the poor old woman in question, while getting up that same night, fell and broke her leg. This of course was conclusive; the man was fully assured that the poker he had hurled at the cat had broken the witch's leg, and that the witch

was no other than the old woman lying lamed in her bed.[1]

The connection between cats and witches is notorious enough, dating at least from the classic story of Galinthea being turned into a cat, and becoming, through the compassion of Hecate, her priestess. The picture of a witch is incomplete without her cat, by rights a black one. It is curious that at Scarborough, a few years back, sailors' wives liked to keep black cats in their homes, to ensure the safety of their husbands at sea. This gave black cats such a value that no one else could keep them; they were always stolen. Mr. Denham has recorded some curious old north-country rhymes on the subject:

Whenever the cat o' the house is black,
The lasses o' lovers will have no lack.

Kiss the black cat,
An' 'twill make ye fat;
Kiss the white ane,
'T will make ye lean.

We find witches and cats constantly together in the folk-lore of the northern countries of Europe. Thus in Eiderstedt, in North Germany, there was a miller who

[1] Spranger relates that a labourer was attacked by three young ladies in the form of cats, and that they were wounded by him. They were found bleeding in their beds next morning. Bodin says that in Vernon, about the year 1566, the witches and warlocks gathered in great multitudes under the shape of cats. Four or five men were attacked in a lone place by a number of these beasts. The men stood their ground with the utmost bravery, succeeded in slaying one puss, and wounded many others. Next day a number of wounded women were found in the town, and they gave the judge an accurate account of all the circumstances connected with their wounding. (The Book of Werewolves, by the Rev. S. Baring Gould, pp. 64, 65.)

Note that in England the extirpation of werewolves, under the Anglo-Saxon kings, has altered the ancient legends of lycanthropy into stories of transformation into hares and cats.—S. B. G.

was unfortunate enough to have his mill burned down every Christmas Eve. At last a courageous servant undertook to keep watch in the mill on the fatal night. The fellow kindled a fire and made himself a good kettleful of porridge, which he stirred with a large ladle, while an old sabre lay beside him. Erelong a troop of cats entered the mill, and he heard one say in a low tone to another, 'Moasekin! go and sit by Hanskin!'—on which a beautiful milkwhite cat came creeping softly to him, and placed herself by his side. In a moment, taking a ladleful of the scalding porridge, he dashed it in her face, then seizing the sabre cut off one of her paws. On this the cats all disappeared, and instead of the paw appeared a delicate woman's hand, with a gold ring on one of the fingers bearing his master's cypher. Next morning the miller's wife lay in bed and would not rise. 'Give me thy hand, wife,' quoth the miller. She refused, but she could not long conceal the mutilated arm, and at last was burnt for a witch.[1]

There is a Norwegian tradition to the same effect, in which a courageous tailor discovers the witchery. Again, in the Netherlands, one bold Jan undertakes to lodge for a night in the haunted castle of Erendegen, provided only he is supplied with everything requisite for frying pancakes. He makes a fire and begins his work, when a black cat walks in, sits down before the fire, and asks Jan what he is about. 'I am making pancakes, my little friend,' answered the hero. Seven more cats entered, put the same question, and are answered as before. Then, taking each other's paws, they danced round and round, on which Jan flings over them the scalding batter from his fryingpan, and they all vanish. The next day it was reported in the village that the shoemaker's wife was

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 26.

burnt all over the body. Bold Jan showed no surprise at the news; he simply said that the castle would not be haunted any longer, which proved to be the case.

Cats and witches appear together in the following Flemish story, from Thorpe's Mythology (vol. iii. p. 237): An inhabitant of Stockham, on the birth of a child, goes to acquaint his mother, and is astonished to find her already informed of the event, though she lived half an hour's walk from the village, and no communication had taken place to his knowledge. On his way home the good man was molested by a perpetually increasing swarm of cats, who crowded about him and obstructed his way. He struck at them with his stick, but to no purpose; they tore away his silver shoe-buckles, and pushed him into the brook which ran by the wayside. On returning home, wet and tired, the man sent for the priest and related his adventure. 'Ah,' said the priest, 'I see what it all is! Now, if you desire your wife and child to do well, take care you give nothing out of your house to anyone who may beg at the door.' The man promised to follow the advice, and for three weeks he did so, though the door was besieged by beggars of every age and condition. At last an old woman came and begged for a crust of bread so piteously that the wife, who was sitting up with the child in her lap, entreated her husband to give it. Against his better judgment, he did so. Instantly the infant was torn from its mother's arms by invisible hands and dashed against the ceiling, while the mother received a shock which threw her into a corner. The priest was summoned, but could do nothing: he pronounced mother and child past human help, and, in fact, both died within a week.

Danish witches transform themselves also into ducks. A huntsman who used to pass the farm of Baller, near

Ostrel, observed constantly in its neighbourhood a hare or a wild duck, neither of which could he ever hit. At last he shot at the duck with a silver button from his jacket, and wounded it, but it fluttered away into the poultry-house. Going into the farm-kitchen to ask for the duck, he saw by the chimney an ugly old woman, with one shoe off, and blood streaming from her leg. She said she had fallen down and hurt herself, but the huntsman felt convinced he saw before him the witch he had shot, and hurried away with the utmost speed.[1]

But to return to our own country. The Rev. J. C. Atkinson has communicated to me some particulars respecting a noted Yorkshire witch, Nan Hardwick by name, which were communicated to him by an inhabitant of Danby. This old woman lived in one of the two lonely old-fashioned huts known as the Spital Houses; and her habit was to go every evening, a little before dark, and squat among the whins on a bank at Oenthorpe, about a mile from her dwelling, for what purpose or in what form the narrator sayeth not. This being her custom, the young men of the neighbourhood took up the practice of collecting the five or six hounds kept in that part of the parish, with any other dogs they could get hold of, to hunt, as they said, 'Auld Nan Hardwick.' When they found her, as they usually did, a loud clatter was heard along the 'causey' or ancient horse-road leading to Oenthorpe in the direction of the witch's residence, all the dogs following in full cry.[2]

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 191.

[2] It is curious to compare this account with that Ben Jonson gives in his 'Sad Shepherd' of 'the sport of witch-hunting, or starting of a hag:'

> Within a gloomy dimble she doth dwell,
> Down in a pit o'ergrown with brakes and briars,
> Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey,

One evening, a little before the usual hour of the hunt, a young man, who was generally foremost in the sport, happened to be on the 'causey' in question, and to see Nan Hardwick on the way to her place of evening resort. 'She was all black that night,' said the narrator (one William Agur, a parishioner of Danby), 'for ye ken she wur not alla's the same to look at;' and the young man (T. P. by name) determined that she should not pass him on the 'causey.' So he drew himself up, set his legs close together, and squared himself so as to engross the entire width of the narrow gangway. The witch neither paused nor turned aside; she came straight on, and in a minute was in the rear of him who would have arrested her. How she went by him T. P. could never tell; he was still occupying the whole space, his legs were still close to each other, but, as far as he could pronounce upon any part of the transaction, he felt convinced she had passed between them.

The young man's father, himself a T. P. too, was about this time Overseer of the Poor, and, witch though she was, 'Au'd Nan Hardwick' applied for parish relief.

Torn with an earthquake down unto the ground,
'Mongst graves and grots, near an old charnelhouse.

* * * * * * * * * * *

All this I know, and I will find her for you,
And show you her sitting in her form. I'll lay
My hand upon her; make her throw her scut
Along her back, when she doth start before us.
But you must give her law, and you shall see her
Make twenty leaps and doubles, cross the paths,
And then squat down before us.

*John.* Crafty Croan,
I long to be at the sport and to report it.

*Scarlet.* We'll make this hunting of the witch as famous
As any other blast of venery.

T. P. stoutly refused her, though he knew well that he thus exposed himself to her illwill. One day, as he was leaving Castleton, he met her coming in the other direction. Between them ran the small stream which drains Danby Dale, now crossed by a 'draught bridge,' then merely by a single stone, just wide enough to let one person pass at a time, with a 'hemmel' or handrail on either side. T. P. reached the bridge first. No feeling of courtesy prompted him to stand back till Auld Nan had crossed, so he marched sturdily on to the middle of the bridge, but no farther. There her power fell upon him, and he stood like a statue, unable to move hand or foot, till she was pleased to set him free—which was not at once.

This anecdote is curious as an instance of a spell undestroyed by the power of running water, and I believe a solitary one. The law is all but absolute, that every species of magic and witchcraft was annihilated by the force of a running stream. The Goblin Page might counterfeit the heir of Buccleugh :

> But as a shallow brook they crossed,
> The elf, amid the running stream,
> His figure changed, like form in dream,
> And fled, and shouted, 'Lost! lost! lost!'

And young Keeldar, in the ballad, secure in the protection of his plume of holly and rowan, and his casque of sand formed by the mermaid, yet fell a prey to Lord Soulis and the Liddesdale Lancers, when they forced him into the brook, for—

> No spell can stay the living tide,
> Or charm the rushing stream.

Auld Nan Hardwick possessed, it would seem, a power beyond that of the mighty masters of the Black Art, in old days. By the kindness of the late

Dr. Johnson, of Sunderland, we may compare this Cleveland witch with her Northumbrian sister, Nannie Scott. He wrote thus to me respecting her :—'We find in this locality many relics of the Scandinavian superstitions, varied and mixed up with modern customs and phraseology. The old keelmen (once numbering some hundreds) on the Wear were brimful of superstitious stories and legends, and their nightly rambles on shore and river, to seek their vessels and bring them in with the tide, are very amusing. I remember, when a boy, a witch who resided in a little hovel near us, in Sunderland, and with whom I was on most friendly terms, much to the disgust of my nurse. She told fortunes by the stars, practised the black art, and sold a compound of treacle, &c., called by us "claggum." Her hatred was considered certain death; and children once under her protection were sure to be lucky in life. She had a black cat and a black dog, both unmitigated savages and thieves (the poor animals, being deemed familiars, were pelted and persecuted into ferocity), and few women were more coaxed and toadied than was Nannie Scott. She prayed for fair winds for sailors' wives; she sold love-charms to bring together sulking sweethearts; and she did all with an air of solemn strong-mindedness that bore down any approach to discredit. She lived to a very great age, and died about twenty years ago.'

Auld Nan Hardwick and Nannie Scott, however, sink into insignificance before the wise man of Stokesley, long the oracle of South Durham, as well as of Cleveland. The name of this personage was Wrightson. He flourished at Stokesley above fifty years ago; and such ascendancy did he obtain in the neighbourhood, that he was at once resorted to in cases of sickness, distress, or loss of property, and this not by the lower orders alone.

His private character appears to have been very bad; still his influence in Stokesley was so great that he was constantly in request as godfather to the children of the place; and on these occasions he used to attend church in a scarlet coat, a long white waistcoat and full-starched shirt-frill, crimson knee-breeches, and white stockings. Several stories of his craft have come to me from an eyewitness, having been repeated to the Rev. J. C. Atkinson by an old man turned eighty-two, but in possession of his faculties, and of entire respectability of character. Wrightson used always to say that he had no power or knowledge beyond other men except when fasting, that he owed his powers to his being the seventh son of a seventh daughter, and that he was quite unable to transmit them to his own son. The following stories, if true, go towards proving him to have been a natural clairvoyant:—

Years ago, when the old man at Danby was young, a relation of his had a cow, which fell ill of a disease which baffled the skill of every cow-leech in the neighbourhood. Our informant was therefore mounted on a horse belonging to his relative, and despatched to Stokesley to consult the wise man. On opening his door—before he had time to explain his errand—the wizard said, 'I know what has brought you here; you have come about a cow, and if I cannot tell you as much about the creature as you can tell me, it is not likely I can help you.' He then proceeded to describe the cow, her colour and appearance, her symptoms—constant restlessness, and uneasy movements, and a peculiar sound she uttered; also her position in the cow-house. 'The door opened,' he said, 'right upon her rump.' The wise man went on to specify her disease, and added that nothing could save her. She died accordingly, and a post-mortem

examination verified all that 'auld Wrightson' had said. But what seems to have struck our informant most was the wizard's remark on the careful way in which he had ridden the horse which brought him to Stokesley—the sender had no son who would have been so careful with the beast.

Another instance of the wise man's strange foreknowledge was as follows. Some pitmen were working together at the Try-up-Trough pits, and left their clothes above, as usual, on descending to their work. In the afternoon, when work was over, one of them missed his shirt, and could not find it anywhere. Borrowing one from a friend, the man started straight from the pits to Stokesley to consult 'auld Wrightson,' taking with him a comrade whose Christian name was Elijah. They passed a place called West House, and there Elijah deposited his overcoat, which was hot and heavy, observing to his friend that they should be able to trust the wise man in the matter of the shirt by seeing whether he knew where the coat was.

Here, too, the wizard forestalled all enquiries by announcing to the men what they had come about; and turning to the comrade, addressed him thus by his Christian name, 'What hast 'ee deean wi' thy coat, Elijah? I think thee 'st left it a' West House. Thinkst 'ee t' wise man knaws aught about t' shart?' As these were the very words the man had used, he was struck dumb with astonishment. The wizard then described the shirt, saying it had been made by a left-handed person (which was true), and finally said its owner would find it at home on his return. He added a warning on giving salt out of the house, a most dangerous thing, and one which the pitman's mother had done that day.

Returning home, they found the shirt had been left there by a fellow-workman, who had carried it away in mistake, and the house-mother had been guilty of the 'dangerous act' of giving salt away. This danger is thus explained:—If the salt passes into the hands of any person who has the power of wishing, *i.e.* of bringing down harm on another by uttering an ill wish, the possession of the salt places the giver entirely within the power of the wish. It is curious that in Spain precisely the same belief holds with regard to leaven.

The next Stokesley story is as follows. A miller, named W——, lost a set of new weights very mysteriously, and all his searchings and enquiries ended in disappointment; he could make out nothing about them. So he applied to the wise man. The miller seems to have been allowed the unusual privilege of stating his case, and the wizard, after consulting his books, announced that he knew about the weights; they should be restored; at present they were concealed in an 'ass-midden.' Accordingly, in the course of a night or two, the weights appeared as mysteriously as they had vanished, being placed at the miller's door, and 'all clamed wi' ass,' which, of course, was satisfactory.

Again, a young bull belonging to an inhabitant of the district was attacked by sickness, and in spite of all remedies was soon at what appeared the point of death —too weak to stand, and slung up by ropes to keep it from falling. The wise man was sent for, and in due time arrived at the house, but declined to speak of the animal; saying, in his usual way, that unless he could tell them all they could tell him, and a little more, it was not likely he could be of much use. At last he condescended to light his pipe, and stroll out to the 'beast-house.' After a little time, curiosity prompted one

or two men who were standing about to follow him, and approaching the byre, they were surprised to see the bull apparently as well as ever, standing without any aid from slings, and eating his provender with a very hearty appetite. The mode of cure remained a secret.

The concluding anecdote respecting 'auld Wrightson,' like that of Nan Hardwick fixing the relentless overseer on the bridge, suggests a notion that, consciously or unconsciously, these worthies practised something like electro-biology. Two men, one of them bearing the name of Bob Bennison, and brother to a person still living at Danby, were on their way to Stokesley Fair, when one of them proposed to turn aside in order to 'see auld Wrightson, and have a bit o' sport wi' him.' On reaching the wise man's house, he gave them an apparently cordial welcome, seated them in front of the fire, and proceeded to mend it by heaping on fuel. Fiercer and fiercer it blazed up, and Wrightson's guests, feeling somewhat too warm, tried to edge their chairs backwards, but their efforts were vain; they found themselves immovably fixed in their seats, and the seats immovably fixed in front of the fire, which all the time was burning hotter and hotter. After giving the men such a roasting as he deemed sufficient, the wizard at length set them free, scornfully bidding them go on to the fair, and there tell their friends 'the sport they had had wi' auld Wrightson.'

Though the wizard doctor of Stokesley professed himself unable to transmit his mysterious powers to his son, one William Dawson pretended to have inherited his books and some of his gifts, and he too was consulted by persons of a respectable position in life. A substantial Yorkshire farmer, having sustained heavy and

continuous losses among his stock, consulted this William Dawson, and was instructed by him how to find out whether witchcraft was really the cause of the mischief. The farmer was to take six knots of bottree (bore-tree or elder) wood, and placing them in orderly arrangement beneath a new ashen bowl or platter, was so to leave them. If, on looking at them some little time afterwards, they were found in confusion, 'all squandered about,' as he phrased it, there could be no doubt the beasts were perishing from the effects of witchcraft. This was done, and on inspection the knots were found in utter confusion. So the farmer was directed to take the heart of one of the dead beasts, and stick in it nine new nails, nine new pins, and as many new needles. The heart thus prepared was to be burnt on a fire made and fed with witchwood (rowan-tree) a little before midnight, at which hour a certain verse of the Bible was to be read over the flames, and the spell would be broken. All was made ready, and the doors of the farmhouse secured with bolt and bar, to say nothing of tables and chairs heaped against them for additional security. The heart lay on the mystic fire; as midnight approached, the operator touched it with the poker, and it burst asunder into many pieces. Gathering them together upon the hot embers, that they might be thoroughly consumed, he read the appointed verse, and at the same moment a rushing and clattering was heard down the paved causey which led from the house-door to the turnpike (the highroad) in front, as if a carriage-and-four were driven down it furiously. Next began a terrible knocking and hammering, first at the front door, then at the back; but as the embers of the heart wasted in the fire, the sounds without grew weaker and fainter, till, as the last spark disappeared,

the noise ceased; and from that night no further harm befell the stock.

The mention of the six knots of elderwood is curious, for that tree mixes largely in folk lore. Some say the cross was made from its wood; others, that on it Judas hanged himself. Mr. Wilkie observes that the tree is obnoxious to witches, because their enemies use the green juice of its inner bark for anointing the eyes. Any baptised person whose eyes are touched with it can see what the witches are about in any part of the world. Compare with this the Danish belief, that he who stands under an elder-bush at twelve o'clock on Midsummer Eve, will see Tolv, the king of the elves, go by with all his train. A Danish remedy for toothache is to take an elder twig, put it into the mouth, then stick it in the wall, saying, 'Depart, thou evil spirit!' As appears by Hans Andersen's stories, it is thought in Denmark that there dwells in the elder-tree a being called Hyldemoer, or elder-mother, who avenges all injuries done to the tree: hence it is not advisable to have moveables of elderwood. The elder-mother once pulled a baby by the legs, and molested it till it was taken out of an elderwood cradle! Danish peasants will not cut this tree without asking permission, thus,—'Hyldemoer, Hyldemoer, permit me to cut thy branches.'[1] In Lower Saxony, the formula is as follows, to be repeated three times, with bended knees and folded hands:—

Lady Elder,
Give me some of thy wood,
Then will I give thee some of mine,
When it grows in the forest.[2]

But to return to Willie Dawson. All his powers, such as they were, failed to help him in the battle of

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 168. [2] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 182.

life, for, from being a farmer at Quaker's Grove, near Stokesley, he sank into poverty, and ended his days, in very reduced circumstances, in South Durham. I have received another account of his magical incantations from a correspondent, who himself witnessed them when a boy. The object of them was to restore to health a young man said to be bewitched. A fire was made by midnight, as before, and the doors and windows closed. Clippings from every finger and toe-nail of the patient, with hair from each temple and the crown of his head, were stuffed into the throat of a pigeon which had previously been placed between the patient's feet, and there had died at once, thus attesting the witchery from which he was suffering. The bird's bill was riveted with three pins, and then the wise man thrust a pin into its breast, to reach the heart, everybody else in the room in turn following his example. An opening was then made in the fire, and the pigeon dropped into it. The wise man began to read aloud Psalms from the Prayer Book, and a loud scratching and whining began outside. All in the house, save my informant, were satisfied that the young man's enemy had appeared outside, perhaps in the form of a dog; he alone attributed the sounds to the wizard's own dog, which had not been allowed to enter the house. His scepticism, however, annoyed the wizard and his dupes so much that the lad was fain to keep it to himself.

A parallel history to William Dawson's wild incantations has been communicated to me by the Rev J. F. Bigge. Not many years ago, there lived at Newcastle a wizard named Black Jock, who was much consulted by the neighbouring people in all cases of doubt and difficulty. On one occasion, a farmer named William P——, who was tenant of Richmond Hill, lost a valuable horse by

a sudden attack of disease so peculiar that it suggested the idea of unhallowed charm and evil eye, or at least of some strange injury inflicted by a spiteful neighbour. So to Black Jock went Farmer P——, and told his tale. The wizard listened, and then announced that the horse had been killed by poison administered to it in brewers' grains; and on payment of one pound, he gave the following directions for discovering the poisoner. The farmer and one chosen friend were secretly to cut up the horse and take out its heart, which they were to stick full of pins and roast before the fire between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, having previously closed carefully every aperture communicating with the outer air, whether door, window, or other opening, and stuffed every interstice with tow or some such material. When the clock struck the midnight hour, they might open the door, and, looking out, they would assuredly see passing by the form of him who had done the injury.

The wizard's injunctions were obeyed with right good will by the farmer and his trusty servant, Forster Charlton; but when they looked out, they saw with astonishment no faint and flitting shadow of a suspicious-looking form, but, as it chanced, one of the most respectable and kindly-disposed among their neighbours, passing by in the flesh, on his way to his own home. To accuse such a man of being privy to the poor horse's death was plainly impossible, yet what were they to think? So, after much consultation, the watchers went to bed in a very perturbed state of mind, determined only on one point, the calling the wizard into council again. Summoned, accordingly, to the spot the very next day, Black Jock carefully inspected the premises, and having discovered a certain round hole on the stairs which opened into the outer air, and which they had overlooked and

omitted to stuff up, he proclaimed with an oracular and impressive demeanour, from which there was no appeal, that such carelessness and disregard of his injunctions could have ended in no other way; that of course the person who had passed by was not the delinquent, but that it was owing to the nonfulfilment of the conditions imposed that they had not seen him; and, what was more, see him now they never would.

These grisly incantations appear to have taken deep root in our 'north countrie.' A farmer near Durham, on the death of a horse, has lately pursued exactly the same plan prescribed by Black Jock, but with better success than attended the Northumbrian farmer; for after the poor steed's heart had been pierced and roasted, the watchers distinctly heard the howling of spirits round the house, and thus satisfied themselves that evil spirits had done the horse to death! The owner of the animal narrated this himself to my informant, who exclaimed, in astonishment, 'Why, surely you don't believe that?' 'But I do,' rejoined the farmer stoutly, 'for I heard them myself.'

A somewhat similar instance transpired at Durham about four years ago. A poor woman, the wife of a pitman, was brought before the bench of magistrates on the charge of stealing a fowl. She made no attempt to deny the fact; indeed, she had previously admitted it to the policeman who apprehended her, saying that she had committed the theft for the purpose of working out a charm which was to restore her sick child to health. The child, it appeared, had long been ailing, and was now fast pining away, when its mother, full of uneasiness about it, consulted a witch who lived near. The witch solemnly charged her to steal a hen, take out the heart, stick it full of pins, and roast it at midnight over

a slow fire, first closing up every communication with the outer air. If this were duly done, the hag promised that, as the heart was gradually consumed, health would return to the suffering child. The magistrates, considering the delusion under which the woman had acted, dismissed the case.

The Rev. H. B. Tristram has communicated to me another case from the south of the county of Durham: 'In November of this year (1861) I was sent for by a parishioner, the wife of a small farmer, who complained that she had been scandalised by her neighbours opposite, who accused her of witchcraft. These neighbours had lost two horses during the last year, and therefore consulted "Black Willie" at Hartlepool, who assured them that they had been bewitched. Acting on his advice, they adopted the following means for discovering the witch. Having procured a pigeon, and tied its wings, every aperture to the house, even to the keyholes, was carefully stopped, and pins were run into the pigeon whilst alive by each member of the family, so as to pierce the poor bird's heart. The pigeon was then roasted, and a watch kept at the window during the operation, for the first person who passed the door would, of course, be the guilty party. The good woman who appealed to me had the misfortune to be the first passer-by, and the family were firmly convinced she had exercised the "evil eye" upon the dead horses, though she was a comely matron, not yet fifty years of age. This happened in a village close to the River Tees.'

The last instance I shall record took place at Whitby in the year 1827. A woman residing in that town was suffering from fever, attended with soreness and swelling of the throat. Among other remedies, camphorated spirits of wine were applied externally to the part

affected; but the patient growing worse, her mother took up a notion that she was bewitched, and that the spell had been fixed by the spirits of wine. The old woman therefore determined to resort to what she called the ancient ordeal. She procured a sheep's heart, stuck it full of new pins, and placed it on the fire to be burnt, watching anxiously all the time for the appearance of the witch who had troubled her daughter. She looked in vain, however, for no one appeared.

There are two or three points worth notice in these grisly rites for the discovery and baffling of witchcraft. First, the employment of mountain-ashwood for the roasting of the heart. Now the rowan, or mountain-ash, is ever the dread of witches, as we see by the old rhyme—

> Black luggie, lammer bead,
> Rowan-tree and red thread,
> Put the witches to their speed.

Mr. Wilkie alleges the following very good reason for their apprehensions. The witch who is touched with a branch of this tree by a christened man will be the victim carried off by the devil when he comes next to claim his tribute. This tribute is alluded to in the ballad of young Tamlane—

> O pleasant is the fairyland,
> And happy there to dwell,
> But aye, at every seven years' end,
> We pay a teind to hell.

Mr. Kelly considers the mountain-ash to be the European representative of the Indian palasa, which it resembles in its light luxuriant foliage and red berries, or of the mimosa, a tree of the very same genus as well as general character. These Indian trees are in as high repute in Hindostan as preservatives against magic as is the rowan in Scotland, in Cornwall, or in Yorkshire. In Cornwall it is called 'care,' and if there is a suspicion

of a cow being 'overlooked,' the herdsman will suspend it over her stall, or wreath it round her horns. That it is still in repute in Yorkshire let this little anecdote witness. I give it in the words of the narrator, as he told it to the Rev. J. C. Atkinson:—

'A woman was lately in my shop, and in pulling out her purse brought out also a piece of stick a few inches long. I asked her why she carried that in her pocket. "Oh," she replied, "I must not lose that, or I shall be done for." "Why so?" I enquired. "Well," she answered, "I carry that to keep off the witches; while I have that about me, they cannot hurt me." On my observing that I thought there were no witches nowadays, she observed quickly, "Oh yes; there are thirteen at this very time in the town, but so long as I have my rowan-tree safe in my pocket, they cannot hurt me."'

This good dame evidently agreed with the old rhymer, who said—

> If your whipstick 's made of row'n,
> You may ride your nag through any town;

but, on the contrary—

> Woe to the lad
> Without a rowan-tree gad!

A bunch of ash-keys is thought as efficacious as the rowan-stick. An incident mentioned to me by the Rev. George Ornsby may be introduced here: 'The other day I cut down a mountain-ash (or wiggan-tree, as it is called here) in my carriage-road. The old man who gardens for me came a day or two after, and was strangely disconcerted on seeing what "master" had done in his absence; "for," said he, "wherever a wiggan-tree grows near a house, t'witches canna come." He was comforted, however, by finding, on closer investigation, that a sucker from the tree had escaped destruction.'

Mr. Wilkie assures us that, like the mountain-ash, the

yew is a very upas-tree to the witches, possibly because of this constant proximity to churches. They hate the holly too, and with good reason: its name is but another form of the word holy, and its thorny foliage and blood-red berries are suggestive of the most sacred Christian associations. The bracken also they detest, because it bears on its root the letter C, the initial of the holy name Christ, which (says Mr. Wilkie) may plainly be seen on cutting the root horizontally. A friend suggests, however, that the letter intended is not the English C, but the Greek $\chi$, the initial letter of the word $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\sigma\varsigma$, which really resembles very closely the marks in the root of the bracken, or *Pteris aquilina*. These marks have, however, been interpreted in many ways. Some say they resemble the Austrian double-headed eagle, and derive from hence the Latin name for the plant; others see in them Adam and Eve standing on either side of the tree of knowledge, or King Charles in the oak; or, again, they try to discover the initials of their future husband or wife.

But witches have their favourite plants as well. They love the broom and the thorn, as well as the ragwort, which is called in Ireland the fairies' horse, and use them all as means for riding about at midnight. They are also fond of hemlock, nightshade, St. John's-wort, and vervain, and infuse their juices into the baleful draughts prepared for their enemies. This statement, however, contradicts that in St. Colne's charm, as sung by Meg Merrilies at the birth of Harry Bertram—

> Trefoil, vervain, John's-wort, dill,
> *Hinder* witches of their will.

It contradicts, also, the old rhyme given in the notes to the Demon Lover, in the 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border': —

Gin ye wud be leman mine,
Lay aside the St. John's-wort and the verveine,

For here these plants appear as countercharms, protecting a maiden from the approach of a very uncannie sprite in the form of a lover.

Of the St. John's-wort the following little notice has reached me from the Isle of Wight. Peasants there say (or did say, before the incursion of visitors drove away all the individuality of the place) that, if you tread on the St. John's-wort after sunset, a fairy horse will rise from the earth and carry you about all night, leaving you in the morning wherever you may chance to be at sunrise.

Mr. Wilkie maintains that the *Digitalis purpurea* was in high favour with the witches, who 'used to decorate their fingers with its largest bells, thence called 'witches' thimbles.' Hartley Coleridge has more pleasing associations with this gay wild flower. He writes of 'the fays,—

That sweetly nestle in the foxglove bells,'

and adds in a note: 'Popular fancy has generally conceived a connection between the foxglove and the good people. In Ireland, where it is called lusmore, or the great herb, and also fairy-cap, the bending of its tall stalks is believed to denote the unseen presence of supernatural beings. The Shefro, or gregarious fairy, is represented as wearing the corolla of the foxglove on his head, and no unbecoming headdress either. Is not the proper etymology "folks' (*i.e.* fairies') glove?" Surely Reynard does not wear gloves in popular tradition?'

But to return to the incantations of Black Jock and his brotherhood. The horse's heart, pigeon, fowl, or whatever else was consumed upon the rowan-tree fire, was pierced through with pins. Now, it is remarkable how often we

come across pins in the records of superstition. Mary de Medicis and her favourite, Leonora Concini, were suspected of practising against the life of Louis XIII. of France, by making a waxen image of him, and impaling it with pins; and the Duchess of Gloucester, in the reign of our Henry VI., was imprisoned on the charge of similar practices. Such sorceries appear to have prevailed extensively in the northern countries of Europe. Thus at Amreem, in North Germany, a man lay for a long time sick in bed, and nothing afforded him relief. Meanwhile a miller observed from his mill that a woman was in the daily habit of going to the Donkkám. One day he followed her footsteps, and on digging in the sand found a little waxen image of a man, with a pin stuck through the heart. He drew the pin out, took the image home, and burned it; from that hour the patient recovered.[1]

Again, if a person is robbed, he goes to a so-called 'cunning man,' who engages to strike out the eye of the thief. The following is the process:—The troll-man

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. page 24. — In Devonshire, witches and malevolent people still make clay images of those whom they intend to hurt, baptise the image with the name of the person whom it is meant to represent, and then stick it full of pins or burn it. In the former case that person is racked with rheumatism in all his limbs; in the second he is smitten with raging fever. Nider, in his 'Hierarchy of Blessed Angels,' speaks of a witch named Æniponte, who, by making an effigy of wax, pricking it with needles in divers parts, and then burying it under the threshold of a neighbour's house whom she much hated, brought upon that neighbour insufferable torments and prickings in the flesh, till the image was found and destroyed, upon which those evils passed away. King James I., in his 'Demonology,' speaks of the practice as very common, and attributes its efficacy to the devil. In Adam Davies' 'Gest, or Romance of Alexander,' Nectabanus, a magician, discovers the machinations of his enemies by embattling them in wax figures. So, too, he bewitches a queen by making a wax puppet of her, and spreading over it herbs of power.—S. B. G.

puts a human figure on a young tree, mutters certain dire spells by the devil's aid, and then drives a sharp instrument into the eye of the figure, thus blinding its representative. Or he will shoot with an arrow or bullet at one of the members of the figure, thus entailing wounds and sores on the corresponding limbs of the living person.[1] The Flemish countercharm is as follows: Let a sorceress melt lead and pour it into water, where it will assume a human form. She must then ask the person bewitched whereabouts in the body of him who caused the evil it shall be sent. The part is named; the sorceress makes a cut or prick in the corresponding limb of the leaden image, saying where the person is who inflicted the evil, but not naming any name. The evil will leave the victim, and alight upon the perpetrator.[2]

It is strange to meet with the same kind of superstition in India also, yet such is the case; witness the following extract from a paper by the Rev. George Pettit, of the Tinnevelly Mission of the Church Missionary Society: 'A man recently under instruction at Pakunari, now a catechist, brought me an ugly wooden image, about six inches long, with nails driven into it in several places, indicating the parts of his body to be attacked with disease. He had found it buried near his door, and brought it thirty miles to show me, trembling through every limb.'

Again, witch-finders used to torment their victims by thrusting pins into them, with the view of discovering upon them the devil's stigma, or mark, a spot which was supposed insensible to pain; and bewitched persons were said to vomit pins in large quantities. Throughout the North of England we have wishing-wells, where the

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 54.
[2] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 279.

passer-by may breathe his wish, and may rest assured of its fulfilment, if only he drop a crooked pin into the water. The Worm Well at Lambton is one of these; there is another in Westmoreland, and another at Wooller, in Northumberland. Certainly at St. Helen's Well, near Thorp Arch, in Yorkshire, the offering was a scrap of cloth fastened to an adjoining thorn, which presented a strange appearance under its burden of rags; and at the Cheese Well, on Minchmuir, in Peeblesshire, it was a piece of cheese flung into the well, but the pin is used as a rule. The country-girls imagine that the well is in charge of a fairy or spirit, who must be propitiated by some offering; the pin presents itself as the most ready and convenient, besides having a special suitableness as being made of metal.

Metallic substances are held throughout the North to counteract the influence of witchcraft and every kind of evil spirit. Thus, a knife or other utensil of steel is placed in the cradle of an unbaptised child in Sweden, to protect it from all such dangers; and, again, bathers there will throw a bit of steel into the water before they plunge into it, saying to the spirit of the stream, 'Neck, neck, steel in strand; thy father was a steel thief, thy mother was a needle thief; so far shalt thou be hence as this cry is heard—Ho, hagler!' Those, too, who visit the holy wells of that country cast into them a piece of money, or a bit of iron or some other metal.[1]

As to the crookedness of the pins dropped into our north-country wells, it would seem that, in folk lore, crooked things are lucky things; witness the high repute of crooked sixpences. Wells reputed sacred, under the tutelage, sometimes of saint, sometimes of fairy, still exist in many parts of our island and in the

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 82.

Hebrides. As late as the year 1740, sickly children were dipped in St. Bede's Well, near Jarrow, and a crooked pin dropped into it; and the same was done when weak eyes were bathed in the well at Whitford, in Flintshire, and when water was drawn from Locksaint Well, in Skye, and drank as a specific for certain complaints.

We pass now to some Tweedside stories of recovery of property by the aid of local superstition. The following anecdote is recorded by the Rev. R. O. Bromfield, of Sprouston, and I am glad to give it in his own words:—

'Some time since, when calling at the house of one of my oldest parishioners, who had been a hand-loom weaver, he fell to speak of other days; and, amongst other things, he told me of the disappearance, some years back, on a fine summer's evening, of a web of linen which had been laid to bleach by the riverside at the foot of the glebe. The fishermen, it seems, were burning the water in the Skerry, and the man who had charge of the web went off to see the salmon "leistered," and on his return the web was gone. Of course there was a sensation. The story was soon in everybody's mouth, with abundant suspicions of as many persons as there were yards in the web of linen.

'The web belonged to a very important personage, no less than the howdie, or old village midwife, who was not disposed to sit down quietly under her loss. So she called in the aid of a wise man from Leetholm, and next day told her friend the weaver, my informant, that she had found the thief, for the wise man had turned the key. The weaver being anxious to see something of diablerie, the howdie brought the wise man to his house; and the door being locked on all within (four in number), the magician proceeded as

follows. He took a small key, and attached it to a string, which he tied into the family Bible at a particular place, leaving the key hanging out. Next he read two chapters from the Bible, one of which was the history of Saul and the witch of Endor; he then directed the howdie and another person to support the key between them, on the tips of their forefingers, and in that attitude the former was told to repeat the names of all the suspected parties.

'Many persons were named, but the key still hung between the fingers, when the wise man cried out, "Why don't you say Jock Wilson?" This was accordingly done, and immediately the key dropped, *i.e.* turned off the finger-ends. So the news spread far and wide that the thief was discovered, for the key had been turned, and Jock Wilson was the man! He proved, however, not to be the man to stand such imputations, and being without doubt an honest fellow, he declared "he wud'na be made a thief by the deevil." So he went to consult a lawyer, but after many long discussions the matter died away; and my authority, the weaver, says it was believed that the lawyer was bribed; "for he aye likit a dram."'

Now here we have something very like an old superstition, which dates at least from the time of Theocritus (B.C. 282). Potter, in his 'Grecian Antiquities,'[1] says that the Greeks called it coskiomancy, and practised it for the discovery of thieves and other suspected persons. They tied a thread to the sieve, by which it was upheld, or else placed under it a pair of shears, which they held up by two fingers; then they prayed to the gods for assistance, after which they repeated the names of the persons under suspicion; and he or she at whose name the sieve moved, was thought to

[1] Vol. i. p. 352.

have committed the offence. Such was the rite resorted to in pagan Greece. Mr. Kelly finds the key to it in the marvellous powers with which the sieve was invested in days of yore through its connection with rainclouds. Throughout the Greek and Teutonic mythology the sieve may be seen in the hand of cloud-gods and cloud-goddesses, who employed it in watering the earth. Hence it became a sacred implement, and the Greeks, Romans, Germans, and Slaves used it alike in divinations and solemn ordeals. Cornelius Agrippa speaks of it as thus employed, and in 'Hudibras' we find mention of—

> The oracle of sieve and shears,
> That turns as certain as the spheres.

The practice has descended in Germany almost to our own day. It is thus carried on in Mecklenburg. They take a sieve that has been inherited from relations, lay it on the rim, open a pair of *inherited* scissors, and stick the points so deep into the rim of the sieve, that it may be supported by them. Two persons then, of opposite sexes, go with the sieve into a perfectly dark place, hold the middle finger of the right hand under the ring of the scissors, and so raise up the sieve. One then enquires, 'In the name, &c., I ask of thee; tell me truly, has Hans, Fritz, Peter, done it?' On naming the guilty one, the ring slides off, the sieve falls to the ground, and the thief is detected.[1]

In the passage above cited, from Potter's 'Grecian Antiquities,' he says that the vulgar, in many parts of England, have an abominable practice of using a riddle and a pair of shears in divination. A book, however, appears commonly to have superseded the key in this country. When Reginald Scott speaks of this species of

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 161.

divination, (in his 'Discovery of Witchcraft,' A.D. 1599), it is with a Psalter and key; and in a case brought before the Thames Police, in 1832, the Bible was used. One Mr. White, it seems, had lost some property, and agreed with the neighbours to resort to the Bible and key in discovery of the thief. They placed the street-door key on the Fiftieth Psalm, closed the volume, and fastened it tightly with a string. The Bible and key were then suspended to a nail, and the name of Mrs. Blucher (the person on whom suspicion had fallen) was repeated three times by one of the women, while another recited these lines:—

> If it turn to thee,
> Thou art the thief, and we all are free.

The key then turned, or was thought to do so, and Mrs. Blucher was proclaimed to be the thief; on which she went into Mrs. White's house and beat her, and was finally brought before the police-court on a charge of assault.

A book and key are used, I believe, in a somewhat similar way, by modern mesmerisers, to test the strength of will. If two persons thus hold them on a string, the key will turn, they say, to the one who possesses the strongest will.

But to return to the Tweedside. I am indebted to the Rev. R. O. Bromfield for the history of another web of linen stolen a few years back from the banks of the same river. In this instance the owner was one Tam Aldren, an elder in the Kirk, and he resorted to a wise woman at Berwick-upon-Tweed. She told him at once that the cloth was then hidden under a certain tree, which she described, and offered to evoke the forms of the thieves, and make them pass before him at that

very moment. But honest Tam demurred: he said, he didna want to ken wha had stolen the claith, but where the claith was put, that he might get it back; and no doubt he entertained, too, a lurking fear of being brought too near the de'il. So away he went in all haste to the tree indicated, to search for his cloth below it, but, alas! he found it not. Seeing however, or fancying he saw, some traces there of the bleaching composition, he maintained ever after that, without any doubt, the cloth had once been on that spot.[1]

In cases like these, it may be remarked that Devonshire superstition points more to the punishment of the thief, than to the recovery of the stolen property. If a robbery has been committed, it enjoins you to pluck six blades of grass from the spot, and take them to a white witch; as many scratches as she makes with a pin in the

[1] It is curious to remark the different forms which superstition assumes in different grades of society. While our peasants resort to the wizard or wise woman, our gentlemen, it seems, actually have recourse to the spirit-rapper. Witness the following anecdote:—

In the early part of the year 1861, a robbery took place near S——, in the county of Durham; the sum taken was large, and the attendant circumstances mysterious. Great efforts were made by the police to discover the thieves, but to no purpose; so the gentleman whose property had been stolen actually sent to London for an eminent spirit-rapper to aid in the search. The spirit having been evoked, it was announced that the lost treasure was deposited in a certain garden; and there, at midnight, the party set to work to recover it. While thus employed, they perceived that they were watched, and, secrecy being requisite for such investigations, they hastily decamped. But what was the horror of the gentleman and his friends when a policeman called the next morning, and announced that he had got on the scent; for he had seen the thieves digging in a garden at midnight, and had heard them speak of the money they expected to find there! Little were they prepared for such a way of 'turning the tables.' What makes this incident the more singular is, that the gentleman who thus sought for the aid of spiritual agency was in the prime of life, and was a person of wealth and good position in the county.

grass blades, so many rents will there be in the face of the thief.

Wild and varied as I know the superstitions of my native county to be, I must plead guilty to some astonishment at discovering among them what Brand calls 'the *foreign* superstition of the Hand of Glory, once firmly believed in many parts of France, Germany, and Spain.' Sir Walter Scott brings it forward as a foreign charm. It is the German adventurer, Dousterswivel, who is conversant with it, and who (in the 'Antiquary') describes it thus racily to the assembled party among the ruins at St. Ruth's:—'Why, my goot master Oldenbuck, you will only laugh at me. But de Hand of Glory is very well known in de countries where your worthy progenitors did live; and it is a hand cut off from a dead man as has been hanged for murder, and dried very nice in de shmoke of juniper-wood; and if you put a little of what you call yew wid your juniper, it will not be any better—that is, it will not be no worse; then you do take something of de fatsh of de bear, and of de badger, and of de great eber (as you do call de grand boar), and of de little sucking child as has not been christened (for dat is very essentials); and you do make a candle, and put into de Hand of Glory at de proper hour and minute, with de proper ceremonish; and he who seeksh for treasuresh shall never find none at all.'[1]

[1] The Hand of Glory is the hand of a man who has been hung, and is prepared in the following manner. Wrap the hand in a piece of winding-sheet, drawing it tight so as to squeeze out the little blood which may remain; then place it in an earthenware vessel with saltpetre, salt, and long pepper, all carefully and thoroughly powdered. Let it remain a fortnight in this pickle till it is well dried, then expose it to the sun in the dog-days till it is completely parched, or, if the sun be not powerful enough, dry it in an oven heated with vervain and fern. Next make a candle with the fat of a hung man, virgin wax, and Lapland sesame. The

Dousterswivel asserts that the monks used the Hand of Glory as a spell to conceal treasures. Southey places it in the hands of the enchanter-king Mohareb, when he would lull to sleep Yohak, the giant keeper of the caves of Babylon—

Thus he said,
And from his wallet drew a human hand,
Shrivelled, and dry, and black.
And fitting, as he spake
A taper in his hold,
Pursued: 'A murderer on the stake had died;
I drove the vulture from his limbs, and lopt
The hand that did the murder, and drew up
The tendon-strings to close its grasp.
And in the sun and wind
Parched it, nine weeks exposed.
The taper . . . . but not here the place to impart
Nor hast thou undergone the rites,
That fit thee to partake the mystery.
Look! it burns clear, but with the air around,
Its dead ingredients mingle deathiness.
This when the keeper of the cave shall feel,
Maugre the doom of heaven,
The salutary spell
Shall lull his penal agony to sleep,
And leave the passage free.' [1]

While Grose gives a full account of it, as used by French housebreakers, in a translation from the French of 'Les Secrets du Petit Albert' (A.D. 1750), alleging that its use was to stupefy those to whom it was presented, and to render them motionless, so that they could not stir any more than if they were dead. There is one instance on record of its use in Ireland: 'On the night of the 3rd

Hand of Glory is used to hold this candle when it is lighted. Wherever one goes with this contrivance, those it approaches are rendered incapable of motion as though they were dead. (Colin de Planey, *Dictionnaire Infernal*, 1818).—S. B. G.

[1] Thalaba the Destroyer, Book V.

instant (January 1831), some Irish thieves attempted to commit a robbery on the estate of Mr. Naper, of Loughcrew, county Meath. They entered the house, armed with a dead man's hand with a lighted candle in it, believing in the superstitious notion that a candle placed in a dead man's hand will not be seen by any but those by whom it is used; and also that if a candle in a dead hand be introduced into a house it will prevent those who may be asleep from awaking. The inmates, however, were alarmed, and the robbers fled, leaving the hand behind them.'

The Stainmore story, however, which has with difficulty been rescued from oblivion by the persevering kindness of friends, is much richer in detail. It is as follows:—One evening, between the years 1790 and 1800, a traveller, dressed in woman's clothes, arrived at the Old Spital Inn, the place where the mailcoach changed horses, in High Spital, on Bowes Moor. The traveller begged to stay all night, but had to go away so early in the morning, that if a mouthful of food were set ready for breakfast, there was no need the family should be disturbed by her departure. The people of the house, however, arranged that a servant-maid should sit up till the stranger was out of the premises, and then went to bed themselves. The girl lay down for a nap on the long settle by the fire, but before she shut her eyes she took a good look at the traveller, who was sitting on the opposite side of the hearth, and espied a pair of man's trousers peeping out from under the gown. All inclination for sleep was now gone; however, with great self-command, she feigned it, closed her eyes, and even began to snore. On this the traveller got up, pulled out of his pocket a dead man's hand, fitted a candle to it, lighted the candle, and passed hand and

candle several times before the servant-girl's face, saying as he did so, 'Let those who are asleep be asleep, and let those who are awake be awake.' This done, he placed the light on the table, opened the outer door, went down two or three of the steps which led from the house to the road, and began to whistle for his companions. The girl (who had hitherto had presence of mind enough to remain perfectly quiet) now jumped up, rushed behind the ruffian, and pushed him down the steps. She then shut the door, locked it, and ran upstairs to try and wake the family, but without success: calling, shouting, and shaking were alike in vain. The poor girl was in despair, for she heard the traveller and his comrades outside the house. So she ran down again, seized a bowl of blue (*i.e.* skimmed milk), and threw it over the hand and candle; after which she went upstairs again, and awoke the sleepers without any difficulty. The landlord's son went to the window, and asked the men outside what they wanted. They answered that if the dead man's hand were but given them, they would go away quietly, and do no harm to anyone. This he refused, and fired among them, and the shot must have taken effect, for in the morning stains of blood were traced to a considerable distance.

These circumstances were related to my informant, Mr. Charles Wastell, in the spring of 1861, by an old woman named Bella Parkin, who resided close to High Spital, and was actually the daughter of the courageous servant-girl.

It is interesting to compare them with the following narrations, communicated to me by the Rev. S. Baring Gould:—'Two magicians having come to lodge in a publichouse with a view to robbing it, asked permission to pass the night by the fire, and obtained it. When

the house was quiet, the servant-girl, suspecting mischief, crept downstairs and looked through the keyhole. She saw the men open a sack, and take out a dry withered hand. They anointed the fingers with some unguent, and lighted them. Each finger flamed, but the thumb they could not light; that was because one of the household was not asleep. The girl hastened to her master, but found it impossible to arouse him. She tried every other sleeper, but could not break the charmed sleep. At last, stealing down into the kitchen, while the thieves were busy over her master's strongbox, she secured the hand, blew out the flames, and at once the whole household was aroused.'[1]

But the next story bears a closer resemblance to the Stainmore narrative. One dark night, when all was shut up, there came a tap at the door of a lone inn in the middle of a barren moor. The door was opened, and there stood without, shivering and shaking, a poor beggar, his rags soaked with rain, and his hands white with cold. He asked piteously for a lodging, and it was cheerfully granted him; there was not a spare bed in the house, but he could lie on the mat before the kitchen-fire, and welcome.

So this was settled, and everyone in the house went to bed except the cook, who from the back kitchen could see into the large room through a pane of glass let into the door. She watched the beggar, and saw him, as soon as he was left alone, draw himself up from the floor, seat himself at the table, extract from his pocket a brown withered human hand, and set it upright in the candlestick. He then anointed the fingers, and applying a match to them, they began to flame. Filled with horror, the cook rushed up the backstairs, and

[1] Delvio. See also Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 274.

endeavoured to arouse her master and the men of the house. But all was in vain—they slept a charmed sleep; so in despair she hastened down again, and placed herself at her post of observation.

She saw the fingers of the hand flaming, but the thumb remained unlighted, because one inmate of the house was awake. The beggar was busy collecting the valuables around him into a large sack, and having taken all he cared for in the large room, he entered another. On this the woman ran in, and, seizing the light, tried to extinguish the flames. But this was not so easy. She blew at them, but they burnt on as before. She poured the dregs of a beer-jug over them, but they blazed up the brighter. As a last resource, she caught up a jug of milk, and dashed it over the four lambent flames, and they died out at once. Uttering a loud cry, she rushed to the door of the apartment the beggar had entered, and locked it. The whole family was roused, and the thief easily secured and hanged. This tale is told in Northumberland.

A variation of the same belief prevailed in Belgium. Not far from Bailleul, in West Flanders, a thief was taken, on whom was found the foot of a man who had been hanged, which he used for the purpose of putting people to sleep. Again, in the village of Alveringen, there formerly lived a sorceress who had a thief's finger over which nine masses had been said; for, being acquainted with the sacristan, she had wrapped it in a cloth and laid it on the altar, telling him it was a relic. With this finger she performed wonderful things. When she had lighted it—for such fingers burn like a candle—everyone in the house where she might be was put to sleep. She would then steal money and everything

else she fancied, till at last she was detected, and the stolen property found in her possession.[1]

In a note to the passage quoted above from Southey's 'Thalaba,' it is mentioned that a somewhat similar practice is recorded by Torquemada of Mexican thieves. They used to carry with them the left hand and arm of a woman who had died in her first childbed; with this they twice struck the ground before the house which they designed to rob, and the door twice, and the threshold twice: the inhabitants, if asleep, were hindered from waking by this charm, and if awake, were stupefied and deprived of speech and motion while the fatal arm was in the house.

But I have wandered a little from the subject of witchcraft proper. Let me return to it, and conclude with an incident more recent than the other illustrations I have adduced. I received it from a clerical friend, whose informant was a pupil in the house of the clergyman referred to.

In the autumn of the year 1851, a clergyman living in Rutlandshire gave a small party, to which a neighbour, also a country clergyman, brought his family and one young lady-visitor. During the evening, this young lady went upstairs into the bedroom of one of her host's family, saw a gold watch hanging up on a nail, took it down, concealed it in her dress, joined the party again, and entered into the amusements of the evening. They dispersed in due time, and the young lady carried away the watch. When its owner retired to her room she at once missed it; enquiries were made, and even the police called in, but to no purpose. Suspicion fell, however, upon a poor woman and her daughter, who had come in as helpers from the village, and this in spite of

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. pp. 274, 275.

the excellent character they had always borne. These persons were much hurt at the accusation, and annoyed at the visits and searchings of the police; so after a few days they called in a wise woman from Leicester, who was famous for aiding to recover lost property. This wise woman was thrown into a mesmeric state by her husband. At first she was violent, but she gradually calmed down, and when they questioned her spoke as follows:—

'I am going over hill and valley, and at length arrive at a village. I come to a gate, go through it into a yard, enter the house, and ascend the stairs.' (She then described accurately the house and the room.) 'I see a watch hanging on a nail. A short young lady in a pink dress, with dark hair, comes in, takes it, and puts it in her bosom. She goes away two miles. She is at this moment walking in a meadow with some children. The watch is in her bosom, and you will find it there; but you must be very quiet about it, for she is full of apprehension, and has been trying to get rid of the watch.'

This history was brought to the family where the young lady was staying. The master of the house was not at all disposed to believe the circumstances, but seeing the poor people persuaded of their truth, he felt himself obliged to order an investigation. The young lady's boxes were searched in vain, but on proceeding to a personal examination, the watch was found in the place specified. The wise woman had stated that this was not the first instance of appropriation on the young lady's part, and here too she proved correct.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LOCAL SPRITES.

The Brownie and Dobie—Brown Man of the Muirs—Killmoulis—Redcap—Powries or Dunters—Wag-at-the-Wa'—Habetrot—Cowlug e'en—Thrumpin—Dunnie—Hobhole Hob—Hob Headless—Peg Powler—Cauld Lad of Hilton—Silky—Picktree Brag—Hedley Kow—Kludde—Oschaert—Padfoot—Barguest—Northern Sprites compared with those of Devon—The Evil Spirit—Clouties Craft—The Minister and Satan—The Devil trying all Callings.

THE Land o'Cakes is well known to be haunted by many kinds of sprites and goblins, some of which have found their way across the Cheviots, while the North of England has unearthly denizens peculiarly its own. The Scotch peasant Barnaby, in the Ettrick Shepherd's tale of the 'Woolgatherer', speaks thus of the sprites of his country, and the popular belief in them of his day:—

'Ye had need to tak care how ye dispute the existence of fairies, brownies, and apparitions: ye may as weel dispute the Gospel of Saint Matthew. We dunna believe in a' the gomral fantastic bogles an' spirits that fly light-headed folk up an' down the countree; but we believe in a' the apparitions that warn o' death, that save life, and that discover guilt. I'll tell you what we believe ye see. The deil and his adjents, they fash none but the gude folk—the Cameronians and the prayin' ministers an' sic-like. Then the bogles, they are a better kind o' spirits; they meddle wi' nane but the guilty; the murderer, an' the mansworn, an' the cheaters o' the widow an' fatherless, they do for *them*. Then the brownie, he's

a kind of half-spirit, half-man; he'll drudge, and do a' the wark about the town for his meat, but then he'll do no wark but when he likes for a' the king's dominions. That's what we a' believe here awa' auld and young.'

Of the good old Brownie, however, that faithful ally of the Scottish household, I have little new to tell. He seems a denizen of the Shetland Islands, the Highlands of Scotland, and the Western Isles, as well as of the Borderland. I must warn you, however, not to confound him with the Dobie, a creature of far less sense and activity. In fact, the Dobie was what I have heard a poor woman call her husband's ghost, 'a mortal heavy sprite;' and hence the common Border phrases, 'Oh ye stupid Dobie!' or 'She's but a senseless Dobie.'[1] The Brownie was therefore preferred as a guardian of hidden treasure, and to him did the Borderers commit their money or goods, when, according to the custom prevalent in wild insecure countries, they concealed them in the earth. Some form of incantation was practised on the occasion, of which I can only learn one part—the dropping upon the treasure the blood of a slaughtered animal, or burying the slain animal with it.

The Brownie is believed in Berwickshire to be the ordained helper of mankind in the drudgery entailed by sin: hence he is forbidden to receive wages.[2] He

[1] Sir Walter Scott seems unaware of this peculiar character of the Dobie. He considers it merely another name for the Barguest, of whom more hereafter; and mentions that he has been informed of some families of the name of Dobie, who carried in their armorial bearings a phantom or spectre passant. (Demonology and Witchcraft, Letter iii.) In a note to Canto 2 of Rokeby, he tells of the Dobie of Mortham, who haunts Greta Dell; but calls it a female spectre, the ghost of a lady formerly murdered in the wood.

[2] Danish tradition goes so far back as to state the origin of the

is allowed his little treats, however, and the chief of these are knuckled cakes, made of meal warm from the mill, toasted over the embers and spread with honey. The housewife will prepare these, and lay them carefully where he may find them by chance. When a tit-bit is given to a child, parents will still say to him, 'There's a piece wad please a Brownie.' A bowl of cream was also a favourite dish. If a family desired to get rid of their inmate, they had only to lay out for him a new hood, and he would take leave of them, singing—

'A new mantle and a new hood
Poor Brownie! ye'll ne'er do mair good.'

Thus, the goodman of the parish of Glendevon left out some clothes one night for the Brownie, and heard him take his departure during the night, saying, in a highly offended tone—

'Gie Brownie coat, gie Brownie sark,
Ye'se get nae mair o' Brownie's wark.'

A lady of Scottish extraction, Mrs. M——, writes thus to me: 'It is curious what dislike Brownies have to

different kinds of sprites. It is said in Jutland, that when Our Lord cast the fallen angels out of heaven, some of them fell down on the mounds or barrows, and became Barrow-folk, or (as they are also called) Mount-folk, or Hill-folk; others fell into the Elf-moors, and became the progenitors of the Elf-folk; while others fell into dwellings, from whom descend the domestic sprites or Nissir—the Brownies, in fact. Another Danish legend is as follows. While Eve was one day washing her children by a spring, Our Lord unexpectedly appeared before her; she was terrified, and concealed those of her children which were not yet washed. Our Lord asked her if all her children were there, and to avoid His anger, in case He should see that all her children were not washed, she answered 'Yes.' Then Our Lord declared that what she had concealed from Him should thenceforth be concealed from mankind, and at the same moment the unclean children disappeared and were buried under the hills. From these descend all the underground folk—Trolls, Elfs, &c.—(Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 115).

clothing. There was one in the old Peelhouse where I was born. The servants, out of gratitude for his assistance, gave him what they deemed an indispensable portion of man's attire. Unfortunately it was part of a suit of livery, and he vanished, crying—

"Red breeks and a ruffled sark!
Ye'll no get me to do yer wark."

The story dates from my great-grandfather's time; but the old dark closet where Brownie dwelt still exists, though dark no longer.'

But not the Brownie alone, with his kindred Northern sprites, is driven away by gifts of clothing. Devonshire Pixies are equally sensitive on this point. It is recorded that one of them on receiving a new suit vanished, exclaiming—

'Pixy fine, Pixy gay,
Pixy now will run away.'

The little Swedish Tomtar too, though he will receive donations of bread, cheese, and even tobacco, is spoiled for work by new clothes; and when a housewife, in gratitude for the meal he sifted in her meal-tub, placed a suit for him on the edge of the tub, he did nothing more for her. He found that the meal damaged his new kirtle, so he cast the sieve away and repeated—

'The young spark is fine,
He dusts himself!
Never more will he sift.'[1]

And the Dutch Kaboutermannekin, or Redcap, on receiving new clothes vanishes never to return. A miller in Kempnerland thus rewarded his Redcap, for a good deal of hard work expeditiously got through; but the

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 94.

goblin, having put on the clothes and strutted about proudly in them, disappeared. The miller, missing his drudge, laid wait for him on a little bridge over a brook, which the Kaboutermannekin used to cross every evening. He watched the sprites as they passed, some clothed, some naked, and last of all came his household sprite in his new suit. 'Haha!' said the miller, 'have I got thee?' and was about to seize little Redcap, when a voice like that of his wife was heard from the rivulet, crying for help. The miller turned and jumped into the water, and in a moment all the mannekins were gone.[1]

Cranshaws, in Berwickshire, was once the abode of an industrious Brownie, who both saved the corn and thrashed it for several seasons. At length, after one harvest, some person thoughtlessly remarked, that the corn was not well mowed or piled up in the barn. The sprite took offence at this, and the next night threw the whole of the corn over the Raven Crag, a precipice about two miles off, muttering—

> 'It's no weel mowed! It's no weel mowed!
> Then it's ne'er be mowed by me again;
> I'll scatter it owre the raven stane,
> And they'll hae some wark ere it's mowed again.'

This little story is taken from Mr. George Henderson's 'Popular Rhymes of Berwickshire.' It reminds us of the Manx Phynnoderee, who, when the farmer complained of his not cutting the grass sufficiently close to the ground, left the grumbler to cut it himself next year, but went after him stubbing up the roots so fast as almost to cut off the man's legs. The Phynnoderee liked clothing as little as the Brownie, and once, when rewarded for special service by the present of a few

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 191.

articles of dress, he lifted them up one by one, exclaiming,—

'Cap for the head! alas, poor head!
Coat for the back! alas, poor back!'

and so on, till, with a melancholy wail, he departed, never to return. Both sprites, like Milton's 'drudging goblin,' delighted in the 'cream-bowl duly set,' but the Brownie at least would have resented the charge of labouring to 'earn' it. Sir Walter Scott relates how the last Brownie in Ettrick Forest, the Brownie of Bodsbeck, vanished when the mistress of the house placed a porringer of milk and a piece of money in his haunts. He was heard to howl, and cry all night 'Farewell bonnie Bodsbeck!' and in the morning disappeared for ever.[1] The Ettrick Shepherd has given the title of the 'Brownie of Bodsbeck' to a tale, in which an exiled Cameronian assumes the character of this mysterious being, and thereby gains shelter and support.

If the Scottish homesteads have their attendant sprites, the wild moorlands are not without their mysterious denizens. In a letter from Mr. Surtees to Sir W. Scott, given in the memoir prefixed to vol. iv. of Surtees' 'History of Durham,' we read, on the authority of an old dame, named Elizabeth Cockburn, how in the year before the Great Rebellion, two young men from Newcastle were sporting on the high moors above Elsdon, and at last sat down to refresh themselves in a green glen near a mountain stream. The younger lad went to drink at the brook, and raising his head again saw the 'Brown man of the Muirs,' a dwarf very strong and stoutly built, his dress brown like withered bracken, his head covered with frizzled red hair, his countenance ferocious, and his eyes glowing like those of a bull. After some

[1] Border Minstrelsy, vol. i. p. 205.

parley, in which the stranger reproved the hunter for trespassing on his demesnes and slaying the creatures who were his subjects, and informed him how he himself lived only on whortleberries, nuts, and apples, he invited him home. The youth was on the point of accepting the invitation and springing across the brook, when he was arrested by the voice of his companion, who thought he had tarried long, and looking round again 'the wee Brown man was fled.' It was thought that had the young man crossed the water the dwarf would have torn him to pieces. As it was he died within the year, in consequence, it was supposed, of his slighting the dwarf's admonition, and continuing his sport on the way home.

Killmoulis is a peculiar species of Brownie, who haunts the mill, and resides in the killogee, or space before the fireplace in the kiln. One would suppose that he took his name from the kiln, but Mr. Wilkie considers 'kill' to be a corruption of 'gill,' and 'killmoulis' to mean the miller's servant. This sprite is a singular creature, for he appears to have no mouth; yet the following rhymes testify to his taste for swine's-flesh:—

> Auld Killmoulis wanting the mow,
> Come to me now, come to me now!
> Where war ye yestreen when I killed the sow?
> Had ye come ye'd hae gotten yer belly fou.

Killmoulis takes the liveliest interest in the miller and his mill. Should any misfortune threaten them he will wail piteously. At the same time he often torments the goodman sorely by throwing 'isles' or ashes out when sheelin or shelled oats are spread out to dry; nor will he leave off his mischievous tricks till the miller calls out,

> 'Auld Killmoulis wanting the mow,
> Come to me now,'

on which he appears, puffing and blowing, in the shape of an old man, the mouth wanting, but with an enormous nose.

Killmoulis will never quit the 'ogee,' his favourite corner, except to thrash the corn in great emergency, or to ride for the Howdie, when the miller's wife needs her services—an errand he will fulfil expeditiously enough, though with some rough usage of the horse.

It appears from 'Thorpe's Mythology' (vol. iii. p. 187), that the mills of Holland are haunted too, but by sprites of a more friendly character, bearing the unwieldy name of Kaboutermannekins. In the village of Gelrode, when the millstone was worn, the miller had only to lay it before his mill at night, together with a slice of bread and butter and a glass of beer, and he was sure to find it in the morning beautifully set.

Every mill was haunted by its own Killmoulis; hence the number of wild stories which linger round these secluded spots. In Roxburghshire Killmoulis is thus drawn into the spell of the 'blue clue,' a divination practised on All-hallowe'en and at other times. You must throw the clue into a pot alone in the gloaming, and wind the worsted on a new clue. Towards the end of the winding Killmoulis will hold the thread. You must ask 'Wha holds?' and he will snort out the name of your future spouse.

Redcap, Redcomb, or Bloody Cap, is a sprite of another sort from the friendly Brownie. He is cruel and malignant of mood, and resides in spots which were once the scene of tyranny—such as Border castles, towers, and Peelhouses. He is depicted as a short thickset old man, with long prominent teeth, skinny fingers armed with talons like eagles, large eyes of a fiery-red colour, grisly hair streaming down his shoulders, iron

boots, a pikestaff in his left hand, and a red cap on his head. When benighted or shelterless travellers take refuge in his haunts, he flings huge stones at them; nay, unless he is much maligned, he murders them outright, and catches their blood in his cap, which thus acquires its crimson hue.

This ill-conditioned goblin may, however, be driven away by repeating Scripture words, or holding up the Cross; he will then yell dismally, or vanish in a flame of fire, leaving behind him a large tooth on the spot where he was last seen.

Now here we plainly have the 'Redcap sly' who sat in Hermitage Castle with the evil Lord Soulis, sorcerer and tyrant alike, and Warden of the South and West Marshes. To him Redcap said:

'While thou shalt bear a charmed life,
And hold that life of me,
'Gainst lance and arrow, sword and knife,
I shall thy warrant be.

'Nor forged steel, nor hempen band
Shall e'er thy limbs confine;
Till threefold ropes of sifted sand
Around thy body twine.'

And when the evil lord was taken, and by the aid of Michael Scott's book 'true Thomas' shaped the ropes 'sae curiously,' we are told that—

Redcap sly unseen was by,
And the ropes would neither twist nor turn.

It was, however, beyond Redcap's power to save his lord from his final doom, and, as the spae-book directed, Lord Soulis was boiled to death in a brazen cauldron on the Nine-stane Rig.

I find this goblin referred to in an old proverb given

in the Denham Tracts: 'He caps Bogie, Bogie capt Redcap, and Redcap capt Old Nick.' And Sir Walter Scott says of him: 'Redcap is a popular appellation of that class of spirits which haunt old castles. Every ruined tower in the South of Scotland is supposed to have an inhabitant of this species.'[1]

Mr. Wilkie has recorded the following lines, which he calls a common song about Redcap:—

Now Redcap he was there,
And he was there indeed;
And grimly he girned and glowed,
Wi' his red cowl on his head.

Then Redcap gave a yell,
It was a yell indeed;
That the flesh neath my oxter grew cauld,
It grew as cauld as lead.

Auld Bluidie cowl ga'ed a girn
It was a girn indeed;
Syne my flesh it grew mizzled for fear,
And I stood like a thing that is dead.

Last Redcowl gave a laugh,
It was a laugh indeed;
'Twas mair like a hoarse, hoarse scrough,
Syne a tooth fell out o' his head.

There are Redcaps in Holland too, but they have little in common with the Scottish Redcap, except the name. They are nearer akin to the Brownie, whom they resemble in their attachment to certain homesteads, in the diligence with which they perform manual labour, and in their abrupt departure on receiving a guerdon in the form of clothing. The Dutch Redcaps light fires during the night, which are invisible save to themselves, but warm the house; and the few sticks they leave of the Hausfrau's stock of brushwood, serve her as long as a great

[1] Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, vol. iv. p. 243.

bundle, and give double the warmth. They are clad in red from head to foot, and have green hands and faces. A Redcap once made the fortune of a poor man by doing all the work of his little farm, and especially by churning at night more butter than anyone else could get from the milk. The man became possessor of a whole herd of cows, and laid up a stocking-full of shining dollars. But, prosperity corrupting him, he grew idle and dissolute, and finally abused Redcap, and threw the bundle of firewood prepared for him by the gudewife into the well. On this the sprite disappeared; the wife was seized with illness, the stocking was only filled with coals, the cows died, and all went to ruin. The peasant begged and prayed that Redcap would return, but to no purpose; he was only answered by the laughs and jeers of the goblin outside the cottage.[1]

Powries, or Dunters, are also sprites who inhabit forts, old castles, peel-towers, or dungeons; and they constantly make a noise there as of beating flax, or bruising barley in the hollow of a stone. If this sound is longer or louder than usual, it portends a death or misfortune. Popular tradition reports that the foundation-stones of these old Border castles were bathed with human blood by their builders the Picts; no wonder then that they were haunted in some way or other!

Wag-at-the-wa', another Border sprite, is mentioned in the following verses, which Mr. Wilkie took down from the recitation of an old lady in the village of Bowden, Roxburghshire:—

> Wag-at-the-wa' went out i' the night,
> To see that the moon was shining bricht,
> The moon she was at the latter fa,'
> 'Gang hame to yere beds!' cried Wag-at-the-wa'.

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 181.

'Why d'ye wag, the witch nickit crook,
When the pyet's asleep where the corbies they rook,
Hell's e'en shimmert on ye i' the moon's latter fa',
And ruins fell cooter will harrie ye a'.'

I maun gae fra' ye, tak tent what I say,
Gae tear frae the sowie an armfu' o' hay,
Fling wisps i' the fire till it mak' a red low,
Frae the eizels will rise up a dead man's pow.

The pow will stare ugsome, but dinna heed that,
Thud fast o' the wisps, and beware o' the cat,
For she will yer fae be, wi' teeth and wi' claw,
An' her mewing will soon warn auld Wag-at-the-wa.'

Whenever the e'en holes wi' low sall be fou,
Then is the time that we maun dread the pow,
For Hell's e'en are firelike and fearfu' to view,
And they oft change their colour fra' dark red to blue.

They pierce like an elf, prick ilk ane that they see,
Then beware o' their shimmer, if yer seen ye will dee,
Your heart's pulse will riot, your flesh will grow cauld,
Oh, how happy the wight that draws breath till he's auld!

Then fly frae the house, to the green quick repair,
And Wag-at-the-wa' will full soon meet ye there,
As ye kneel 'neath the Rood and mutter yer prayer. . . .

These obscure lines do not give us much information respecting Wag-at-the-wa'. We are told elsewhere, however, that he is a sort of Brownie, who presided over the Border kitchen, where he acted family monitor, but was a torment to the servants, especially to the kitchen-maid. His seat was by the hearth, or on the crook or bar of iron, terminating in a large hook, which may be seen in old houses hanging by a swivel from a beam in the chimney to hold pots and kettles. Whenever the crook was empty, Wag-at-the-wa' would take possession of it, and swing there with great complacency, only absenting himself when there was a death in the family.

He was fond of children and of household mirth, and hence his attachment to the ingle. When droll stories were told his laugh might be heard distinctly; but if he heard of any liquor being drunk, except home-brewed ale, he would cough and be displeased.

His general appearance was that of a grisly old man, with short crooked legs, while a long tail assisted him in keeping his seat on the crook. Sometimes he appeared in a grey mantle, with the remains of an old 'pirnicap' on his head, drawn down over that side of the face which was troubled with toothache, a constant grievance of his; but he commonly wore a red coat and blue breeches, both garments being made of 'familie woo.'

Altogether there is something uncannie about this ancient sprite, and the mode of his disappearance (for he has passed away from the Scottish ingle) does not speak well for him. A deep cut is now invariably made in the iron of the crook in the form of a cross, and is called the witches' mark, because it warns witches from the fire. This sign also scares away auld Wag-at-the-wa', and keeps him from touching the crook.* Still it is deemed wrong and foolish ever to wag the crook, since it is a sort of invitation to the sprite to return. Mr. Wilkie says that he has seen a visitor rise up and leave the house, because one of the boys of the family idly swung the crook: she was so horrified at this 'invokerie' that she declared 'she wad na abide in the house where it was practised.'

Mr. Wilkie says that the sign of the Cross was in like manner marked on many tools and utensils, down to the 'torwoodie' of the harrow, as a protection against sprites of doubtful character—a singular preservative in Presbyterian Scotland! In many parts of England, however,

we find an analogous use of this sign. The Durham butchers mark it on the shoulder of a sheep or lamb after taking off the skin, the housewives on their loaves of bread before placing them in the oven. In the West of England, I believe, the Cross is more commonly made on the dough when set to rise.

In the old days, when spinning was the constant employment of women, the spinning-wheel had its presiding genius or fairy. Her Border name was Habetrot, and Mr. Wilkie tells the following legend about her :—

A Selkirkshire matron had one fair daughter, who loved play better than work, wandering in the meadows and lanes better than the spinning-wheel and distaff. The mother was heartily vexed at this taste, for in those days no lassie had any chance of a good husband unless she was an industrious spinster. So she cajoled, threatened, even beat her daughter, but all to no purpose; the girl remained what her mother called her, 'an idle cuttie.'

At last, one spring morning, the gudewife gave her seven heads of lint, saying she would take no excuse; they must be returned in three days spun into yarn. The girl saw her mother was in earnest, so she plied her distaff as well as she could; but her little hands were all untaught, and by the evening of the second day a very small part of her task was accomplished. She cried herself to sleep that night, and in the morning, throwing aside her work in despair, she strolled out into the fields, all sparkling with dew. At last she reached a flowery knoll, at whose feet ran a little burn, shaded with woodbine and wild roses; and there she sat down, burying her face in her hands. When she looked up, she was surprised to see by the margin of the stream an old woman, quite unknown to her, 'drawing out the thread'

as she basked in the sun. There was nothing very remarkable in her appearance, except the length and thickness of her lips, only she was seated on a self-bored stone. The girl rose, went to the good dame, and gave her a friendly greeting, but could not help enquiring what made her so 'long lipit.' 'Spinning thread, ma hinnie,' said the old woman, pleased with her friendliness, and by no means resenting the personal remark. It must be noticed that spinners used constantly to wet their fingers with their lips, as they drew the thread from the rock or distaff. 'Ah!' said the girl, 'I should be spinning too, but it's a' to no purpose, I sall ne'er do my task;' on which the old woman proposed to do it for her. Overjoyed, the maiden ran to fetch her lint, and placed it in her new friend's hand, asking her name, and where she should call for the yarn in the evening; but she received no reply; the old woman's form passed away from her among the trees and bushes, and disappeared. The girl, much bewildered, wandered about a little, sat down to rest, and finally fell asleep by the little knoll.

When she awoke she was surprised to find that it was evening. The glories of the western sky were passing into twilight grey. Causleen, or the evening star, was beaming with silvery light, soon to be lost in the moon's increasing splendour. While watching these changes, the maiden was startled by the sound of an uncouth voice, which seemed to issue from below a self-bored stone, close beside her. She laid her ear to the stone, and distinctly heard these words: 'Little kens the wee lassie on the brae-head that ma name's Habetrot.' Then looking down the hole she saw her friend, the old dame, walking backwards and forwards in a deep cavern among a group of spinsters all seated on colludie stones

(a kind of white pebble found in rivers), and busy with distaff and spindle. An unsightly company they were, with lips more or less disfigured by their employment, as were old Habetrot's. The same peculiarity extended to another of the sisterhood, who sat in a distant corner reeling the yarn; and she was marked, in addition, by grey eyes, which seemed starting from her head, and a long hooked nose.

While the girl was still watching, she heard Habetrot address this singular being by the name of Scantlie Mab, and tell her to bundle up the yarn, for it was time the young lassie should give it to her mother. Delighted to hear this, our listener got up and turned homewards, nor was she long kept in suspense. Habetrot soon overtook her, and placed the yarn in her hands. 'Oh, what can I do for ye in return?' exclaimed she, in delight. 'Naething—naething,' replied the dame; 'but dinna tell yer mither whae spun the yarn.'

Scarcely crediting her good fortune, our heroine went home, where she found her mother had been busy making sausters, or black puddings, and hanging them up in the lum to dry, and then, tired out, had retired to rest. Finding herself very hungry after her long day on the knoll, the girl took down pudding after pudding, fried and ate them, and at last went to bed too. The mother was up first the next morning, and when she came into the kitchen and found her sausters all gone, and the seven hanks of yarn lying beautifully smooth and bright upon the table, her mingled feelings of vexation and delight were too much for her. She ran out o' the house wildly, crying out—

'Ma daughter's spun se'en, se'en, se'en,
Ma daughter's eaten se'en, se'en, se'en,
And all before daylight!'

A laird, who chanced to be riding by, heard the exclamation, but could not understand it; so he rode up and asked the gudewife what was the matter, on which she broke out again—

'Ma daughter's spun se'en, se'en, se'en,
Ma daughter's eaten se'en, se'en, se'en

before daylight; and if ye dinna believe me, why come in and see it.' The laird's curiosity was roused; he alighted and went into the cottage, where he saw the yarn, and admired it so much, he begged to see the spinner.

The mother dragged in the blushing girl. Her rustic grace soon won his heart, and he avowed he was lonely without a wife, and had long been in search of one who was a good spinner. So their troth was plighted, and the wedding took place soon afterwards, the bride stifling her apprehensions that she should not prove so deft at her spinning-wheel as her lover expected. And once more old Habetrot came to her aid. Whether the good dame, herself so notable, was as indulgent to all idle damsels does not appear—certainly she did not fail this little pet of hers. 'Bring your bonnie bridegroom to my cell,' said she to the young bride soon after her marriage; 'he shall see what comes o' spinning, and never will he tie you to the spinning-wheel.'

Accordingly the bride led her husband the next day to the flowery knoll, and bade him look through the self-bored stone. Great was his surprise to behold Habetrot dancing and jumping over her rock, singing all the time this ditty to her sisterhood, while they kept time with their spindles:—

We who live in dreary den,
Are both rank and foul to see;

Hidden frae the glorious sun,
That teems the fair earth's canopie:
Ever must our evenings lone
Be spent on the colludie stone.

Cheerless is the evening grey,
When Causleen hath died away,
But ever bright and ever fair,
Are they who breathe this evening air;
And lean upon the self-bored stone
Unseen by all but me alone.

The song ended, Scantlie Mab asked Habetrot what she meant by her last line, 'Unseen by all but me alone.' 'There is ane,' replied Habetrot, 'whom I bid to come here at this hour, and he has heard my song through the self-bored stone.' So saying she rose, opened another door, which was concealed by the roots of an old tree, and invited the bridal pair to come in and see her family.

The laird was astonished at the weird-looking company, as he well might be, and enquired of one after another the cause of the strange distortion of their lips. In a different tone of voice, and with a different twist of the mouth, each answered that it was occasioned by spinning. At least they tried to say so, but one grunted out 'Nakasind,' and another 'Owkasaänd,' while a third murmured 'O-a-a-send.' All, however, conveyed the fact to the bridegroom's understanding; while Habetrot slily hinted that if his wife were allowed to spin, her pretty lips would grow out of shape too, and her pretty face get an ugsome look. So before he left the cave he protested his little wife should never touch a spinning-wheel, and he kept his word. She used to wander in the meadows by his side, or ride behind him

over the hills, and all the flax grown on his land was sent to old Habetrot to be converted into yarn.[1]

Such are the tales of Border sprites which Mr. Wilkie has collected. He adds that the villages of Bowden and Gateside had a strange belief that on a certain night in the year (thence called 'Cowlug e'en') a number of sprites were abroad with ears resembling those of cows; but he could not discover the origin of the belief, nor which night was thus distinguished.

He mentions also that in the South of Scotland, every person was supposed to be attended by a sprite, who had the power of taking away his life—a strange perversion of the doctrine of Guardian Angels. This is called by the old name of 'Thrumpin,' and is mentioned in these obscure verses :—

When the hullers o' night are loosin',
When the quakers are crumplin eerie;
When the moon is in the latter fa',
When the owlets are scraughin drearie;
When the elleried are clumperin,
When the toweries hard are thrumpin,
When the bawkie bird he kisses the yud,
Then, then's the time for thrumpin.

[1] This story, though not without variations, is radically the same as the three spinners of German household tales—Grimm, K.M. 14; Prætorius Gluckstopf, 404; Pescheck Nachrichten, i. 355; Mullenhoff, No. 8. In Sweden we find the same story (see 'Cavalliers,' p. 214); also in Norway (Asbgörnsen, p. 69); and again in the collection of Neapolitan Household Tales, made by Basile, in the seventeenth century: we meet with it too in Lithuania (Schleicher, p. 12). The outline of the plot in all is as follows. A poor woman beats her daughter for idleness, and tells a merchant who is passing that she does it to compel her daughter to spin six hanks of yarn. The merchant at once proposes for the daughter, marries her, and then sets her to spin a large quantity of yarn during his absence on a journey. She is assisted by a fairy, who deceives the husband into forbidding his wife to spin any more.—S. B. G.

And gif ye miss the mystic hour,
When vengeful sprites are granted power,
To thrump ilk faithless wight;
The heavens will gloom like a wizard smile
An' the foremost will dirn his carcase vile
Fra' all uncannie sight.
For man and beast by the three stones light,
Hae little chance to thrive;
Till the sixty are past, and not till the last,
Can man and beast survive.*

I have lately heard, from a clerical friend, of a strange Northumbrian sprite, who had been entirely passed over in any accounts of Northern folk-lore to which I have had access. This sprite is called the Dunnie; he appears to be of the Brownie type, and is located at Haselrigg, in the parish of Chatton, in Northumberland. Like others of his race, he is much addicted to mischievous, troublesome tricks, such as the following, in which he frequently indulges.

When the midwife is wanted in a farmer's family, and the master goes out to saddle his horse that he may fetch her, the Dunnie will take its form. The false creature carries him safely, receives the midwife also on his back behind the farmer; but on their return, in the muddiest part of the road, he will suddenly vanish, and leave the unhappy pair floundering in the mud. Or, again, when the ploughman has (as he believes) caught his horse in the field, brought him home, and harnessed him, he will, to his dismay, see the harness come 'slap to the ground,' while the steed kicks up his heels and starts across the country like the wind.

Some years ago, the Dunnie was often seen wandering among the crags of the Cheviots, and heard repeating the following verse again and again, in a melancholy voice :—

Cocken heugh there's gear enough,
Collier heugh there's mair,
For I've lost the key o' the Bounders,
An' I'm ruined for evermair.

Hence it has been thought that the Dunnie is really the ghost of a 'reiver,' who had hoarded his ill-gotten pelf in those crags, and therefore haunts them constantly. In Mr. James Hardy's paper on 'Legends respecting Huge Stones', the third line runs, 'I've lost the key o' the Bowden-door,' which corresponds still better with this legend.

In my own county we have a sprite of a more benign character. He bears the homely name of Hob, and resides in Hobhole, a natural cavern in Runswick Bay, which is formed, like the fairy caves near Hartlepool and the recesses near Sunderland, by the action of the tides. He was supposed to cure the whooping-cough, so parents would take children suffering from that complaint into the cave, and in a low voice invoke him thus:

Hobhole Hob!
Ma' bairn's gotten 't kink cough,
Tak't off! tak't off!

Another sprite, called Hob Headless, infested the road between Hurworth and Neasham, but could not cross the Kent, a little stream flowing into the Tees at the latter place. He has been exorcised, however, and laid under a large stone, formerly on the roadside, for ninety-nine years and a day. Should any luckless person sit on that stone, he would be unable to quit it for ever. There is yet a third Hob at Coniscliffe, near Darlington, but I have not been able to gain any information about him.

The River Tees has its sprite, called Peg Powler, a

sort of Lorelei, with green tresses, and an insatiable desire for human life. She is said to lure people to her subaqueous haunts, and then drown or devour them. The foam or froth, which is often seen floating on the higher portion of the river in large masses, is called 'Peg Powler's suds;' the finer less sponge-like froth is called 'Peg Powler's cream.' Mr. Denham tells us that children are still warned from playing on the banks of the Tees, especially on Sundays, by threats that Peg Powler will drag them into the water; and he pleads guilty to having experienced great terror whenever, as a boy, he found himself alone by the haunted stream. The River Skerne too has a goblin or sprite, but of what character I have not learned.

The counties of Northumberland and Durham are certainly peculiarly rich in tricksy spirits. There is the Cauld Lad of Hilton, who haunted Hilton Castle in the Valley of the Wear. Seldom seen, he was heard night after night by the servants. If they left the kitchen in order, he would amuse himself by hurling everything wildly about; if they left it in confusion, he would arrange everything with the greatest care. Harmless as he seemed, the servants got tired of him; so they laid a green cloak and hood before the kitchen-fire, and set themselves to watch the result. At midnight the 'Cauld Lad' glided in, surveyed the garments, put them on, frisked about, and when the cock crew, disappeared, saying:

> 'Here's a cloak, and there's a hood,
> The Cauld Lad of Hilton will do no more good.'

All this bespeaks him a sprite of the Brownie type; still he is, in the neighbourhood, deemed the ghost of a servant-boy, slain by an old baron of Hilton, in a moment

of passion. The baron, it is said, ordered his horse to be ready at a particular time, waited for it in vain, went to the stable, found the lad asleep, and struck him a blow with a hayfork, which killed him. The baron, it is added, covered the victim with straw till night, and then threw him into a pond, where indeed the skeleton of a boy was discovered years afterwards. Some verses, said to be sung by the Cauld Lad at dead of night, certainly accord well with the notion of his being a ghost:

Wae's me, wae's me,
The acorn's not yet
Fallen from the tree,
That's to grow the wood;
That's to make the cradle,
That's to rock the bairn,
That's to grow to a man,
That's to lay me!

A friend of mine, born and brought up in the Borders, tells me of another Cauld Lad, of whom she heard in her childhood, during a visit to Gilsland, in Cumberland. He perished from cold, at the behest of some cruel uncle or stepdame; and ever after his ghost haunted the family, coming shivering to their bedsides before any one was stricken by illness, his teeth audibly chattering; or, if it were to be fatal, laying his icy hand upon the part which would be the seat of disease, saying,

'Cauld, cauld, aye cauld,
An' ye'se be cauld for evermair!'

About eighty or ninety years ago, the quiet village of Black Heddon, near Stamfordham, in Northumberland, was greatly disturbed by a supernatural being, popularly called Silky, from the nature of her robes. She was remarkable for the suddenness with which she would

appear to benighted travellers, breaking forth upon them, in dazzling splendour, in the darkest and most lonely parts of the road. If he were on horseback, she would seat herself behind him, 'rustling in her silks,' accompany him a certain distance, and then as suddenly disappear, leaving the bewildered countryman in blank amazement.

Silky had a favourite resort at Belsay, two or three miles from Black Heddon, on a romantic crag beautifully studded with trees, under whose shadow she would wander all night. The bottom of this crag is washed by a picturesque little lake, at whose outlet is a waterfall, over which a fine old tree spreads its waving branches, forming by their intersection a sort of chair. In this Silky loved to sit, rocked to repose by the wild winds, and it is still called Silky's Chair; Sir Charles M. L. Monck, the present proprietor of the place, preserving the tree carefully, on account of the legend.

This sprite exercised a marvellous power over the brute creation, arresting horses in their daily work, and keeping them still as long as she was so minded. Once she waylaid a waggon bringing coals to a farm near Black Heddon, and fixed the team upon a bridge, since called, after her, 'Silky's Brig.' Do what he would, the driver could not make the horses move a step, and there they would have stood all night had not another farm-servant fortunately come up with some 'witchwood' (mountain-ash) about him. He went to the horses, and they moved on at once, but never did their driver dare to go abroad again without being well armed with witch-wood.

In some respects Silky showed a family likeness to the Brownies. Like them she would, during the night, tidy a disorderly house; but if cannie decent people had

cleaned their rooms, and arranged them neatly, especially on a Saturday afternoon, the wayward sprite would disarrange everything as soon as they were gone to bed, so that on Sunday morning all would be in the wildest confusion.

Silky disappeared from her haunts very suddenly. One day a female servant, being alone in one of the rooms of a house at Black Heddon, was terribly frightened by the ceiling above suddenly giving way, and a black mass falling through it with a crash upon the floor. She instantly fled out of the room, screaming at the pitch of her voice, 'The devil's in the house!—the devil's in the house! He's come through the ceiling!' The family collected around her in some alarm, and at first no one dared enter the room; when the mistress at last ventured to go in, she found on the floor a large rough skin filled with gold. From this time Silky was never more heard or seen, so it was believed that she was the troubled phantom of some person who had died miserable because she owned treasure, and was overtaken by her mortal agony before she had disclosed its hiding-place. The Rev. J. F. Bigge relates, however, that an old woman named Pearson, of Welton Mill, whom he visited on her deathbed, told him, a few days before her death, that she had seen Silky the night before, sitting at the bottom of her bed, all dressed in silk.

Mr. James Hardy, Silky's historian, to whom I am indebted for these particulars respecting the wayward sprite, tells me of three sister spirits, also clad in silk attire. One is the family apparition of the mansion of Houndwood, in Berwickshire, and bears the quaint name of 'Chappie.' A knocking was repeatedly heard at the front-door of this house, but only on one occasion was anyone seen. Then a grand lady swept in, and went

up the staircase, but was never seen again in or out of the house. Denton Hall, near Newcastle, was also haunted by a female form, clad in rustling silks, and so was a shady avenue near North Shields. This last Silky was thought to be the ghost of a lady who was mistress to the profligate Duke of Argyle in the reign of William III., and died suddenly, not without suspicions of murder, at Chirton, near Shields, one of his residences. The Banshee of Loch Nigdal, too, was arrayed in a silk dress, green in colour. All these traditions date from a period when silk was not in common use, and therefore attracted notice in country places.

Sir Cuthbert Sharpe, in his 'Bishoprick Garland,' tells us of the Picktree Brag, a spirit as mischievous and uncannie as the Dunnie, who appeared in widely different shapes on different occasions. Sometimes it was like a calf, with a white handkerchief round its neck, and a bushy tail; sometimes, in form of a coach-horse, it trotted 'along the lonin afore folks, settin' up a great nicker and a whinny now and then.' Again it appeared as a 'dick-ass,' as four men holding up a white sheet, or as a naked man without a head. Sir Cuthbert's informant, an ancient dame, told him how her uncle had a white suit of clothes, and the first time he ever put them on he met the Brag, and never did he put them on again but some misfortune befel him. Once, in that very suit, returning from a christening, he encountered the Brag, and being a bold man, he leapt upon its back; 'but when he came to the four lonin ends, the Brag joggled him so sore, that he could hardly keep his seat; and at last it threw him into the middle o' the pond, and ran away, setting up a great nicker and laugh, just for all the world like a Christian.'

The Hedley Kow was a bogie, mischievous rather than malignant, which haunted the village of Hedley, near Ebchester. His appearance was never very alarming, and he used to end his frolics with a horselaugh at the expense of his victims. He would present himself to some old dame gathering sticks, in the form of a truss of straw, which she would be sure to take up and carry away. Then it would become so heavy she would have to lay her burden down, on which the straw would become 'quick,' rise upright, and shuffle away before her, till at last it vanished from her sight with a laugh and shout. Again, in the shape of a favourite cow, the sprite would lead the milkmaid a long chase round the field, and after kicking and routing during milking-time would upset the pail, slip clear of the tie, and vanish with a loud laugh. Indeed, the 'Kow' must have been a great nuisance in a farmhouse, for it is said to have constantly imitated the voice of the servant-girl's lovers, overturned the kail-pot, given the cream to the cats, unravelled the knitting, or put the spinning-wheel out of order. But the sprite made himself most obnoxious at the birth of a child. He would torment the man who rode for the howdie, frightening the horse, and often making him upset both messenger and howdie, and leave them in the road. Then he would mock the gudewife, and when her angry husband rushed out with a stick to drive away the 'Kow' from door or window, the stick would be snatched from him, and lustily applied to his own shoulders.

Two adventures with the Hedley Kow are thus related. A farmer named Forster, who lived near Hedley, went out into the field one morning, and caught, as he believed, his own grey horse. After putting the harness on, and yoking him to the cart, Forster was about to

drive off, when the creature slipped away from the limmers 'like a knotless thread,' and set up a great nicker as he flung up his heels and scoured away, revealing himself clearly as the Hedley Kow. Again, two young men of Newlands, near Ebchester, went out one evening to meet their sweethearts; and arriving at the trysting-place, saw them, as it appeared, a short distance before them. The girls walked on for two or three miles; the lads followed, quite unable to overtake them, till at last they found themselves up to the knees in a bog, and their beguilers vanished, with a loud Ha! ha! The young men got clear of the mire and ran homewards, as fast as they could, the bogie at their heels, hooting and mocking them. In crossing the Derwent they fell into the water, mistook each other for the sprite, and finally reached home separately, each telling a fearful tale of having been chased by the Hedley Kow, and nearly drowned in the Derwent.

Surely this Northern sprite is closely akin to Robin Goodfellow, whom Ben Jonson introduced to us as speaking thus:—

> Sometimes I meete them like a man,
> Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound,
> And to a horse, I turn me can,
> To trip and trot about them round.
> But if to ride,
> My backe they stride,
> More swift than wind away I go:
> O'er edge and lands,
> Through pools and ponds,
> I whirry laughing, Ho! ho! ho![1]

[1] The Dunnie, Brag, and Hedley Kow are probably the same as the Nick or Nippen. The Irish Phooka takes the shape of a horse, and induces children to mount him, then plunges with them over a precipice. The Scotch Water Kelpie (Sir W. Scott's 'Minstrelsy of Scottish Border,' p. 3) performs the same pranks. (Motherwell's 'Minstrelsy,' p. 93;

The Kludde of Brabant and Flanders, an evil spirit of a Proteus-like character, a good deal resembles the Hedley Kow, though, perhaps, he is of a yet more alarming and dreadful character. In fact, he inspires such fear among the peasants, that they will on no account venture into a forest, field, or road which is haunted by him.

Kludde often transforms himself into a tree, small and delicate at first, but rapidly shooting into the clouds, while everything it shadows is thrown into confusion. Again he presents himself as a black dog, running on its hind-legs, with a chain round its throat; and will spring at the throat of the first person he meets, fling him to the ground, and vanish. Occasionally Kludde will assume the form of a cat, frog, or bat,

Buchan's 'Ancient Ballads,' vol. i. p. 214.) The Icelanders have a lay to this effect. A damsel (Elen) goes to the waterside, and is carried off on the grey Nykkur-horse, which she foolishly mounts. The Nykk claims her as his bride, but she escapes by saying she will marry *Nobody*; and as nobody is the Nykk's name, the spell is broken and she escapes.

This is a widespread legend. It exists as a ballad in Faroese, as 'Nikurs Visa,' hitherto unpublished.

In Norwegian it is found in 'Landstad,' No. 39, and in Page's 'Norskefolke Sage', second edition, p. 49.

In Swedish it is contained in 'Afzel,' Nos. 11 and 89, and also in 'Sagohafder,' vol. ii. p. 154.

In Danish we find it in 'Syr,' No. 91; and in Danmark's g. l. Folks, v. No. 39.

There are numerous German versions of the same: Meinert's Altdeut. Volkslieder, I. 6, No. 4; Wunderhorn, iv. p. 77; Zuccalmaglio, Deut. Volkslieder, No. 29; Deutsches Museum für 1852, II. p. 164, &c.

A Wendish version occurs in Haupt og Schmaler, I. No. 34: a Slovakian ballad to the same effect in Achalel og Korgtko, I. p. 30; Grimm's Deut Sagen, No. 51; Haupt og Schmaler, I. p. 339: a Bohemian form of the same in Ido v. Durengelfeld, Böhmische Rosen, p. 183.

There is also a Breton popular ballad, very similar, in Villemarqué's 'Barzas Breig,' fourth edition, vol. i. p. 259.

The Icelandic version is in Islenzk forn kvœde ved Svend Grundtvig, Pt. I. No. 2.—S. B. G.

in which disguises he may always be known by two little blue flames fluttering or dancing before him; but most commonly he appears as an old half-starved horse, and so presents himself to stable-boys and grooms, who mount on it by mistake, instead of on their own horse or mare. Kludde sets off at full speed, the frightened lad clinging on as best he may, till they reach water, into which he rushes and laughs wildly, till his victim, sullen and angry, has worked his way to dry land again.

Oschaert, a sprite which haunted the town of Hamme, near Dendermonde, was of much the same character. On one occasion it appeared to a young man who went out courting—first as an enormous horse, then like a huge dog, then as a rabbit springing backward and forwards before his path; and finally like a gigantic ass, with fiery eyes as large as plates. It does not appear that Oschaert ever received travellers on his back; but he used sometimes to leap on theirs, and cling on with outspread claws, till the poor victim came either to a cross-road or to an image of the Virgin, when his burden would fall off. On those who were troubled in conscience, Oschaert used to press very heavily, striking his claws deep into their flesh, and scorching their necks with his breath. But all is past now. A good priest has exorcised the sprite, and banished him to the seashore for ninety-nine years, and there he wanders now.

Then, in Yorkshire, the villages around Leeds have a nocturnal terror called the Padfoot. He is described as about the size of a small donkey, black, with shaggy hair and large eyes like saucers; and it follows people by night, or waylays them in the road which they have to pass.

A certain Yorkshire woman, called Old Sally Drans-

field, the carrier from Leeds to Swillington, is a firm believer in the Padfoot. She declares that she has often seen it—sometimes rolling along the ground before her, like a woolpack—sometimes vanishing suddenly through a hedge. My friend, the Rev. J. C. Atkinson, of Danby, speaks of the Padfoot as a precursor of death; as sometimes visible, sometimes invisible, but ever and anon padding lightly in the rear of people, then again before them or at their side, and uttering a roar totally unlike the voice of any known animal. Sometimes the trail of a chain would be heard, accompanying the light quick pad of the feet. In size it was somewhat larger than a sheep, with long smooth hair. It was certainly safer to leave the creature alone, for a word or a blow gave it power over you; and a story is told of a man, whose way being obstructed again and again by the Padfoot, kicked the thing, and was forthwith dragged along through hedge and ditch to his home, and left under his own window.[1]

These creations of Northern fancy have, together with

[1] A man in Horbury has lately seen 'the Padfooit.' He was going home by Jenkin, and he saw a white dog in the hedge. He struck at it, and the stick passed through it. Then the white dog looked at him, and it had 'great saucer e'en;' and he was so 'flayed' that he ran home trembling and went to bed, when he fell ill and died. 'The Padfooit,' in this neighbourhood is a white dog like a 'flay-craw.' It goes sometimes on two legs, sometimes it runs on three. To see it is a prognostication of death. I have no doubt that 'the Padfooit is' akin to the two white sows yoked together with a silver chain, which ran down the church-lane in Lewtrenchard, Devon. It was the custom in ancient times to bury a dog or a boar alive under the cornerstone of a church, that its ghost might haunt the churchyard, and drive off any who would profane it—*i. e.*, witches or warlocks.

In Sweden the beast which haunts churchyards is called the Kyrkogrim. It is there said that the first founders of Christian churches used to bury a lamb under the altar. When anyone enters a church out of service-time he may chance to see a little lamb spring across the quire,

some individualisms, a good many attributes in common. I imagine that the Padfoot is the same with the Barguest, Bahrgeist, or Boguest of Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire. The proverbial expression, 'To roar like a Barguest,' attests to the hold he has had on the popular mind. His vocation appears to have been that of a presage of death; and bearing this in mind, Sir Walter Scott's derivation of his name from the German 'bahrgeist,' spirit of the bier, seems the most probable among the many suggested. A friend informs me that Glassensikes, near Darlington, is haunted by a Barguest, which assumes at will the form of a headless man (who disappears in flame), a headless lady, a white cat, rabbit, or dog, or a black dog. There is a Barguest, too, in a most uncannie-looking glen, between Darlington and Houghton, near Throstlenest.

Remarkable as are the points of resemblance between the folk-lore of the North and the West of England, the dissimilarity on certain subjects is equally remarkable. How widely do these grotesque and churlish goblins differ from the light and frolicsome Devonshire pixy! The pixy is mischievous too, but graceful and gay in his mischief. I have received from Mr. Baring Gould a very interesting description of a curious oil-painting preserved at Lewtrenchard House, Devon, representing the merrymaking of pixies or elves, which may perhaps be inserted here:—

and vanish. That is the church lamb. Its appearance in the graveyard, especially to the gravedigger, is held to betoken the death of a child. In Denmark the animal is called the Kirkegrim.

A grave sow is often seen in the streets of Kroskjoberg. This is said to be the apparition of a sow once buried alive, and to forebode death. In building a new bridge at Halle, which was completed in 1843, the people wanted to have a child immured in the foundation to secure its stability.—S. B. G.

'In the background is an elfin city, illumined by the moon. Before the gates is a ring of tiny beings dancing merrily around what is probably a corpse-candle: it is a candle-stump, standing on the ground, and the flame diffuses a pallid white light.

'In the foreground is water, on which floats a pumpkin, with a quarter cut out of it, so as to turn it into a boat with a hood. In this the pixy king and his consort are enthroned, while round the sides of the boat sit the court, dressed in the costume of the period of William of Orange, which is the probable date of the painting. On the hood sits a little elf, with a red toadstool as an umbrella over the head of king and queen. In the bow sits Jack-o'-lanthorn, with a cresset in his hands, dressed in a red jacket. Beside him is an elf playing on a jew's-harp, which is as large as himself; and another mischievous red-coated sprite is touching the vibrating tongue of the harp with a large extinguisher, so as to stop the music.

'The water all round the royal barge is full of little old women and red-jacketed hobgoblins, in egg-shells and crab-shells; whilst some of the imps, who have been making a ladder of an iron boat-chain, have missed their footing, and are splashing about in the water. In another part of the picture the sprites appear to be illuminating the window of a crumbling tower.'

Respecting the Evil Spirit, the veritable Satan, I have collected but a few notices, though it must have struck my readers that Redcap and Wag-at-the-wa' were suspiciously like him. Border tradition maintains that he has been known to assume the form of a black ram with fiery eyes and long horns, or of a sow, a bull, a goat or horse, a very large dog, or a brindled cat. It is impossible for him to take that of the lamb. Of birds he can only simulate the crow and the drake. The farmyard

cock and hen, and the pigeon, are too pure for him to have anything to do with—the former from their watchfulness, the latter because it has no gall-bladder. It is curious to compare this piece of Border folk-lore with that of Devonshire, where it is said that the devil can assume all shapes except those of the lamb and the dove. A little girl, on the borders of Dartmoor, told this to one of my relations, adding, 'He can't make himself look like *they*, because of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.'[1]

Mr. G. Henderson's 'Popular Rhymes of Berwickshire' tells us of a remarkable piece of service formerly done to the Evil One. 'Cloutie's croft,' he says, 'or the gudeman's field, consisted of a small portion of the best land, set apart by the inhabitants of most Scottish villages as a propitiatory gift to the devil, on which property they never ventured to intrude. It was dedicated to the devil's service alone, being left untilled and uncropped, and it was reckoned highly dangerous to break up by tillage such pieces of ground.'[2]

A little anecdote has been related to me by the minister of ——, on the Tweedside, which shows that the Evil Spirit is held to have power of molesting good Christians in wild, lonely places. A country minister, after attending a meeting of his presbytery, had to return home alone, and very late, on a dark evening.

[1] A Sussex boy once told me, that if a letter were placed under the pillow at night offering to the devil to sell one's soul, the letter would be gone in the morning, and half-a-crown found in its place.—S. B. G.

[2] In several parishes in Devonshire is a patch of land hedged in, which is called Gallitrap, and considered uncannie. There is such a piece in the parish of Lewtrenchard. The superstition connected with it is that it is a gallow's trap, for if anyone 'feyed' to be hung enters the field, he cannot leave it again, but must wander round and round it, without power to find the gate, or climb the fence, till the parson and the magistrate are sent for; the first to take the spell off him, the second to see to his being hung.—S. B. G.

While riding in a gloomy part of the road, his horse stumbled, and the good man was suddenly flung to the ground. A loud laugh followed, so scornful and so weird, that the minister felt no doubt of the quarter whence it proceeded. However, with a stout heart, he remounted without delay, and continued his journey, crying out, 'Ay, Satan, *ye* may laugh; but when I fall, I can get up again; when *ye* fell, *ye* never rose'—on which a deep groan was heard. This was firmly believed to have been an encounter with the Evil Spirit, and a great triumph for the dauntless minister.

A strange story is told by Scottish firesides, how the devil desired to learn one trade after another, but failed in all. First, he would be a weaver, but he pricked his fingers with the pins of the temples, and threw up that occupation. A scrap of an old song speaks of his weaving days—

> The weaver de'il gaed out at night
> To see the new, new moon,
> Wi' a' the traddles at his back,
> An' the sowin' bag aboon.

Next he tried his fortune as a tailor, but first he sewed his fingers to the cloth, and then spoiled the sleeve of the coat he was making by cutting the curve of the elbow wrong; on which his master, out of all patience, ran the bodkin into his side, and knocked him over the board with the goose. After this he took service with a blacksmith, and attempted to shoe a horse, but he only pricked the horse, and drove the nails into his own finger. As a farrier he maltreated the horse; as a tinker he split the caldrons he should have mended: as a carpenter he wounded himself with the chopper, bruised his hands with the plane, fell over the logs of wood he should have sawn, and got the toothache from

the noise produced by filing the tools. Lastly, as a shoemaker, he took wrong measures, and lost the rub-sticks which were under his care, till his master gave him a severe 'yocking,' and disgusted him for ever with the awl and the last. Nothing remained to him but to start verse-maker, and wander from alehouse to ale-house, singing the drinking-songs he composed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WORMS OR DRAGONS.

Probable Origin of these Legends—Worm of Sockburn—The Pollard Worm—The Lambton Worm—The Laidley Worm of Spindleston Heugh—The Linton Worm—The Dragon of Strathmartin.

Among the rich and varied folk-lore of the North of England and the Scottish Lowlands, it is impossible not to remark how numerous and characteristic are the legends respecting dragons or, as we locally call them, worms. These tales are sometimes enshrined in ballads, sometimes bound up with the tenure of property, sometimes sculptured as part of church decorations; but all live yet upon the lips of the people, though of course we cannot presume to guess how long they will maintain their ground against the combined forces of railroads and collieries.

Sir Walter Scott, in his 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,' accounts for these legends by suggesting that in bygone days, before our country was drained and cleared of wood, large serpents may have infested British woods or morasses, and taxed the prowess of British champions. I believe that Mr. Surtees held the same opinion, and Lord Lindsay, in his 'Sketches of Christian Art,' writes as follows: 'The dragons of early tradition, whether aquatic or terrestrial, are not perhaps wholly to be regarded as fabulous. In the case of the former, the race may be supposed to have been perpetuated till the marshes or inland seas left by

the Deluge were dried up. Hence probably the legends of the Lernæan hydra, &c. As respects their terrestrial brethren (among whom the serpent, which checked the army of Regulus for three days near the River Bagradus in Numidia, will be remembered), their existence, testified as it is by the universal credence of antiquity, is not absolutely incredible. Lines of descent are constantly becoming extinct in animal genealogy.' But be this as it may, the creatures still survive in Northern folk-lore, and accordingly it is with a peculiar fitness that the author of the 'Dragon of Wantley' places the den of monster 'in Yorkshire, near fair Rotherham.'

Whether the dragon of Wantley was a fair type of the Northern worm I can scarcely say:

> This dragon had two furious wings
> Each one upon each shoulder;
> With a sting in his tayl, as long as a flayl,
> Which made him bolder and bolder.
>
> He had long claws, and in his jaws,
> Four-and-forty teeth of iron;
> With a hide as tough, as any buff,
> Which did him round environ.

Certainly, in some cases, our worms or dragons possess four legs, and 'the scaly horror of a folded tail;' but Mr. Surtees, the historian of the Palatinate, vindicates his countrymen from all charge of inaccuracy in calling such creatures *worms*, by reminding us that 'Dante calls that venerable quadruped, Cerberus, *Il gran vermo inferno*.'

Let us begin with the Worm of Sockburn, whose story is interesting from its extreme antiquity, and its connection with an old tenure of land. The manor of Sockburn was for generations held by the presentation of a falchion to the Bishop of Durham on his first

entrance into his diocese. This service is said to date from the time of Bishop Pudsey, who purchased from Richard I., for himself and his successors, the title of Earl of Sadberge. And from the time of this 'jolye Bishop of Durham' (as Hugh Pudsey is called in an old record) to that of Van Mildert, the last of her Palatines, each bishop, as he entered his diocese, was met on Croft Bridge, or in the middle of the River Tees, by the lord of the manor of Sockburn, who, after hailing him Count Palatine and Earl of Sadberge, presented him with the falchion, and said these words:

'My Lord Bishop, I here present you with the falchion wherewith the champion Conyers slew the worm, dragon, or fiery flying serpent, which destroyed man, woman, and child; in memory of which the king then reigning gave him the manor of Sockburn, to hold by this tenure, that upon the first entrance of every bishop into the county this falchion should be presented.'

The Bishop then took the falchion into his hand, and immediately returning it, wished the lord of Sockburn health and a long enjoyment of the manor.

There is mention made of this tenure in the inquest held on the death of Sir John Conyers, in A.D. 1396. The falchion also appears in painted glass in a window of Sockburn Church, and together with the worm is sculptured in marble on the tomb of the ancestor of the Conyers family. In April 1826, the steward of Sir Edward Blackett, then lord of Sockburn manor, presented the falchion on Croft Bridge to Dr. Van Mildert, the last Prince-Bishop of Durham. Whether the Palatinate Act provided for the extinction of the service, or it lapsed to the Crown, I am not informed.

Tradition is not very consistent with regard to the Pollard Worm. Sometimes she pictures it as a venomous

serpent, sometimes as a wild boar or brawn; but without doubt its local habitation was Bishop's Auckland, the bishop's land of oaks, and there it was slain by the champion knight Pollard, of Pollard Hall, who received as his guerdon as much land as he could ride round while the Bishop dined. This estate, called Pollard's Dene, in the parish of Bishop's Auckland, was held by a tenure similar to that of the lordship of Sockburn, and the presentation speech ran as follows:

'My Lord, I, in behalf of myself, as well as several others, possessors of the Pollard's lands, do humbly present your lordship with this falchion at your first coming here, wherewith, as the tradition goeth, he slew of old a venomous serpent, which did much harm to man and beast; and by performing this service we hold our lands.'

It may be added that the family of Pollard is a very ancient one, and its crest, an arm holding a falchion.

Of the Lambton Worm far more is known. Partly from the romantic character of its history, partly because it relates to a family of note in the county, it seems to have taken deep hold of the popular mind in Durham, and it is also fortunate in a chronicler. About thirty years ago, Sir Cuthbert Sharpe, the friend of Mr. Surtees, and his assistant in the History of the Palatinate, collected every particular respecting this worm from old residents in the neighbourhood of Lambton, and placed the whole in the 'Bishoprick Garland,' a collection of legends, songs, ballads, &c., relating to the county of Durham. As only one hundred and fifty copies of this little work were printed, and it is now extremely scarce, free use has been made of it in the following account of the Worm of Lambton:—

The park and manor-house of Lambton, belonging

to a family of the same name, lie on the banks of the Wear, to the north of Lumley. The family is a very ancient one, much older, it is believed, than the twelfth century, to which date its pedigree extends. The old castle was dismantled in 1797, when the present mansion was built on the north bank of the swiftly-flowing Wear, in a situation of exceeding beauty. The park also contains the ruins of a chapel, called Brugeford or Bridgeford, close to one of the bridges which span the Wear.

Long, long ago, some say about the fourteenth century, the young heir of Lambton led a careless, profane life, regardless alike of his duties to God and man, and in particular neglecting to attend mass, that he might spend his Sunday mornings in fishing. One Sunday, while thus engaged, having cast his line into the Wear many times without success, he vented his disappointment in curses loud and deep, to the great scandal of the servants and tenantry as they passed by to the chapel at Brugeford.

Soon afterwards, he felt something tugging at his line, and trusting he had at last secured a fine fish, he exerted all his skill and strength to bring his prey to land. But what were his horror and dismay on finding that, instead of a fish, he had only caught a worm of most unsightly appearance! He hastily tore the thing from his hook, and flung it into a well close by, which is still known by the name of the Worm Well.

The young heir had scarcely thrown his line again into the stream, when a stranger of venerable appearance, passing by, asked him what sport he had met with. To which he replied, 'Why, truly, I think I have caught the devil himself. Look in and judge.' The stranger looked, and remarked that he had never seen the like of it before; that it resembled an eft, only it had nine

holes on each side of its mouth; and, finally, that he thought it boded no good.

Meanwhile the worm remained in the well till it outgrew so confined a dwelling-place. It then emerged, and betook itself by day to the river, where it lay coiled round a rock in the middle of the stream, and by night to a neighbouring hill, round whose base it would twine itself; while it continued to grow so fast, that it soon could encircle the hill three times. This eminence is still called the Worm Hill. It is oval in shape, on the north side of the Wear, and about a mile and a half from Lambton Hall.

The monster now became the terror of the whole country side. It sucked the cows' milk, worried the cattle, devoured the lambs, and committed every sort of depredation on the helpless peasantry. Having laid waste the district on the north side of the river, it crossed the stream and approached Lambton Hall, where the old lord was living alone and desolate. His son had repented of his evil life, and had gone to the wars in a distant country. Some authorities tell us he had embarked as a crusader for the Holy Land.

On hearing of their enemy's approach, the terrified household assembled in council. Much was said, but to little purpose, till the steward, a man of age and experience, advised that the large trough which stood in the courtyard should immediately be filled with milk. This was done without delay; the monster approached, drank the milk, and, without doing further harm, returned across the Wear to wrap his giant form around his favourite hill. The next day he was seen recrossing the river; the trough was hastily filled again, and with the same results. It was found that the milk of 'nine kye' was needed to fill the trough; and if this

quantity was not placed there every day, regularly and in full measure, the worm would break out into a violent rage, lashing its tail round the trees in the park, and tearing them up by the roots.

The Lambton Worm was now, in fact, the terror of the North Country. It had not been left altogether unopposed. Many a gallant knight had come out to fight with the monster, but all to no purpose; for it possessed the marvellous power of reuniting itself after being cut asunder, and thus was more than a match for the chivalry of the North. So, after many conflicts, and much loss of life and limb, the creature was left in possession of its favourite hill.

After seven long years, however, the heir of Lambton returned home, a sadder and a wiser man: returned to find the broad lands of his ancestors waste and desolate, his people oppressed and wellnigh exterminated, his father sinking into the grave overwhelmed with care and anxiety. He took no rest, we are told, till he had crossed the river and surveyed the worm as it lay coiled round the foot of the hill; then, hearing how its former opponents had failed, he took counsel in the matter from a sybil or wise woman.

At first the sybil did nothing but upbraid him for having brought this scourge upon his house and neighbourhood; but when she perceived that he was indeed penitent, and desirous at any cost to remove the evil he had caused, she gave him her advice and instructions. He was to get his best suit of mail studded thickly with spear-heads, to put it on, and thus armed to take his stand on the rock in the middle of the river, there to meet his enemy, trusting the issue to Providence and his good sword. But she charged him before going to the encounter to take a vow, that, if successful, he would

slay the first living thing that met him on his way homewards. Should he fail to fulfil this vow, she warned him that for nine generations no lord of Lambton would die in his bed.

The heir, now a belted knight, made the vow in Brugeford Chapel; he studded his armour with the sharpest spear-heads, and unsheathing his trusty sword, took his stand on the rock in the middle of the Wear. At the accustomed hour the worm uncoiled its 'snaky twine,' and wound its way towards the hall, crossing the river close by the rock on which the knight was standing, eager for the combat. He struck a violent blow upon the monster's head as it passed, on which the creature, 'irritated and vexed,' though apparently not injured, flung its tail round him, as if to strangle him in its coils.

Now was seen the value of the sybil's advice. The closer the worm wrapped him in its folds, the more deadly were its self-inflicted wounds, till at last the river ran crimson with its gore. Its strength thus diminishing, the knight was able at last with his good sword to cut the serpent in two; the severed part was immediately borne away by the swiftness of the current, and the worm, unable to reunite itself, was utterly destroyed.

During this long and desperate conflict, the household of Lambton had shut themselves within-doors to pray for their young lord, he having promised that when it was over, he would, if conqueror, blow a blast on his .bugle. This would assure his father of his safety, and warn them to let loose the favourite hound, which they had destined as the sacrifice on the occasion, according to the sybil's requirements and the young lord's vow. When, however, the bugle-notes were heard

within the hall, the old man forgot everything but his son's safety, and rushing out of doors, ran to meet the hero and embrace him.

The heir of Lambton was thunderstruck; what could he do? It was impossible to lift his hand against his father; yet how else to fulfil his vow? In his perplexity he blew another blast; the hound was let loose, it bounded to its master; the sword, yet reeking with the monster's gore, was plunged into its heart; but all in vain. The vow was broken, the sybil's prediction fulfilled, and the curse lay upon the house of Lambton for nine generations.

The exact date of the story is of course uncertain. Sir Cuthbert Sharpe appends to it the following entry from an old manuscript pedigree, lately in the possession of the family of Middleton, of Offerton:—'John Lambton, that slewe ye worme, was knight of Rhodes and lord of Lambton, after ye dethe of fower brothers—"*sans eschew malle.*"' Now nine ascending generations, from a certain Henry Lambton, Esq., M.P., would exactly reach to Sir John Lambton, knight of Rhodes; and it was to that Henry Lambton that the old people of the neighbourhood used to look with great anxiety, marvelling whether the curse would 'hold good to the end.' He died in his carriage, crossing the new bridge at Lambton, on the 26th of June, 1761; and popular tradition is clear and unanimous in maintaining that, during the period of the curse, no lord of Lambton ever died in his bed. The violent deaths of some among them are recorded in history. Sir William Lambton, a colonel of a regiment of foot, in the service of Charles I., was slain at Marston Moor; and his son William, as gallant a Royalist as his father, received his death-wound at Wakefield, at the head of a troop of dragoons,

A.D. 1643. Surely such deaths as these show how a curse may pass into a blessing!

It may be added that two stone figures of some antiquity and tolerable workmanship existed lately at Lambton Castle. One of these was apparently an effigy of our hero—studded armour, sword, and vanquished monster, all as described in the legend, except that the worm is endowed with ears, legs, and even a pair of wings. The other figure was a female one, and marked by no very characteristic features. It might, however, have been meant for the sybil. The trough from which the worm took its daily tribute of milk is still to be seen at Lambton Hall; and Mr. Surtees mentions that, in his young days, he saw there a piece of some tough substance, resembling bull's hide, which was shown him as part of the worm's skin.

From the green banks of the Wear we must pass to the stern and rock-bound coast of Northumberland, if we would make acquaintance with the Laidley (*i.e.* loathly, or loathsome) Worm of Spindleston Heugh. Its history is exceedingly popular on the Borders, as Sir Walter Scott remarks in his 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,' though he refrains from transcribing it on account of its resemblance to 'Kempion.' The legend was put into verse—very unequal, however, in character—by a former vicar of Norham.

It opens with a parting between a king and his daughter. He goes out to win a second bride, and leaves his child, the Lady Margaret, in charge of Bamborough Castle. We see her, during her father's absence, arranging everything against his return, tripping out and tripping in, with the keys hanging over her left shoulder. At last the day arrives; the chieftains of the Border are all assembled to receive the king

and queen. They come; the Lady Margaret welcomes them to hall and bower, and then, turning sweetly to her stepmother, reminds her that everything now is hers. One of the chieftains, struck by the young girl's beauty and simplicity, praises her loudly in the queen's hearing, as

> Excelling all of woman kind
> In beauty and in worth.

The jealous queen mutters, 'You might have excepted me;' and from that hour Margaret's fate was sealed. The next morning the maiden was standing at her bower-door, laughing for joy of heart; but before nightfall her stepdame had witched her to a loathsome worm, so to abide till her brother, the Childe of Wynde, should come to her rescue from beyond seas. The cave is still shown at Spindleston Heugh where the worm hid itself by day; during the night it would wander on the coast. We do not hear of any depredations it committed, beyond the exaction of a tribute of milk (that favourite beverage of Northern worms!); but so poisonous was the creature, that for seven long miles in every direction the country was laid waste; no green thing would grow.

At last, word went over the sea to the Childe of Wynde, that his native land was desolated by a Laidley Worm on Spindleston Heugh; and, fearing lest any harm should befall his sister, he summoned his merry men, thirty-and-three in number:

> They built a ship without delay,
> With masts of the rowan-tree,
> With fluttering sails of silk so fine,
> And set her on the sea.
>
> They went on board, the wind with speed
> Blew them along the deep;
> At length they spied a huge square tower
> On a rock so high and steep.

The sailors recognised the Northumbrian coast and King Ida's Castle, and made towards shore.

Meanwhile, the queen looked out of her bower-window, and spying the gallant ship with its silken sails, sent out her evil companions, the 'witch wives,' to sink it in the waters; but they returned baffled and sullen, murmuring that there must be rowan-wood about the ship, for all their spells were powerless. Next she dispatched a boat with armed men to withstand the landing of the vessel; but the gallant Childe speedily put them to the rout. Lastly, it would seem that the worm itself withstood its deliverer, for we are told that

> The worme lept up, the worme lept down,
> She plaited round the stone,
> And aye, as the ship came close to land,
> She banged it off again.

However, the Childe of Wynde steered the ship out of her reach, ran ashore on the sands of Budle, a small village near Bamborough, and, drawing his sword, went boldly towards the monster, as if to do battle at once. But the creature submitted, exclaiming,—

> 'O quit thy sword, and bend thy bow,
> And give me kisses three;
> For though I be a poisonous worme,
> No hurt I'll do to thee.
>
> O quit thy sword, and bend thy bow,
> And give me kisses three;
> If I'm not won ere set of sun,
> Won shall I never be.'
>
> He quitted his sword, and bent his bow,
> He gave her kisses three;
> She crept into her hole a worme,
> But out stept a ladye.

Our hero folded his recovered sister in his mantle, and bore her with him to Bamborough Castle, where he found his father inconsolable for her loss, though, through the queen's witcheries, he had tamely submitted to it. However, the queen's power was over now, and the Childe pronounced her unalterable doom. Changed into a toad, she was to wander till doomsday round Bamborough Castle, and the fair maidens of that neighbourhood believe that she still vents her malice against them by spitting venom at them.

Crossing the Border into Roxburghshire, we approach the haunts of the Worme of Linton, and very romantic they are. There is the mountain stream of the Kail, bursting in brightness from the Cheviot Hills, and hurrying into the plain below, where it pauses, ere it wends its way to join the Tweed; there is the low irregular mound, marking where stood the Tower of Linton, the stronghold of the Somervilles; there is the old village church, standing on its remarkable knoll of sand; there are the stately woods of Clifton, and, above all, the lofty heights of Cheviot crowning the distance.

Such is the fair scene which tradition avers was once laid waste by a fierce and voracious monster. His den, still named the 'Worm's Hole,' lay in a hollow to the east of the Hill of Linton; and small need had he to leave it, for from this retreat he could with his sweeping and venomous breath draw the neighbouring flocks and herds within reach of his fangs. Still he did occasionally emerge and coil himself round an eminence of some height, at no great distance, still bearing the name of Wormington or Wormistonne. Liberal guerdons were offered to any champion who would rid the country of such a scourge, but in vain—such was the dread inspired

by the monster's poisonous breath. Not only were the neighbouring villagers beside themselves with terror, but the inhabitants of Jedburgh, full ten miles off, were struck with such a panic, that they were ready to desert their town.

At last, however, the Laird of Lariston, a man of reckless bravery, came forward to the rescue of this distressed district; and, as the Linton cottagers testify to this day, having once failed in an attack with ordinary weapons, he resorted to the expedient of thrusting down its throat a peat dipped in scalding pitch and fixed on his lance. The device proved perfectly successful. The aromatic quality of the burning pitch, while it suffocated and choked the monster, preserved the champion from the effects of its poison-laden breath. While dying, the worm is said to have contracted its folds with such violent muscular energy, that the sides of Wormington Hill are still marked with their spiral impressions. In requital of his service, the Laird of Lariston received the gift of extensive lands in the neighbourhood.

The Somervillè family (for nearly four hundred years Lords of Linton) claim the merit of this exploit for the John Somerville who received the Barony of Lynton in 1174, and built its tower. They maintain that it was conferred on him by William the Lion as a reward for slaying the worm, and they bear a dragon for their crest in memorial of it. Unfortunately, however, in their hands the worm loses much of its grandeur and importance. The monster encircling the hillock with its snaky coils, becomes 'in length three Scots' yards, and somewhat bigger than an ordinary man's leg, with a head more proportionable to its length than greatness, in form and colour like to our common muir-edders.' In this disparaging way at least is the Linton Worm

described by the author of 'The Memoirs of the Somervilles,' A.D. 1680.

The sculptured effigy of the monster, which may still be seen with the champion who slew it, at the south-western extremity of Linton Church, differs from both accounts. A stone, evidently of great antiquity, is there built into the wall. It is covered with sculpture in low relief, and bears figures which, though defaced by time, can yet be made out pretty clearly. A knight on horseback, clad in a tunic or hauberk, with a round helmet, urges his horse against two large animals, the foreparts of which only are visible, and plunges his lance into the throat of one. Behind him is the outline of another creature, apparently of a lamb. The heads of the monsters are strong and powerful, but more like those of quadrupeds than of serpents. It is perplexing also to see two of them, but not the less does popular tradition connect the representation with the Linton Worm, and aver that the inscription below it, now quite defaced, ran thus:

> The wode Laird of Larristone
> Slew the Worme of Wormestone,
> And wan a' Linton parochine.

It should be added, that though the present church appears to have been rebuilt at no very distant date, it stands on the site of the former one, and is formed from its materials; this sculptured stone having stood, it is said, above the door of the old church. Whether it really represents some doughty deed by which the first Somerville won the favour of William the Lion, or visibly embodies the great conflict between Christianity and Paganism, has been much disputed by antiquarians. The figure, resembling a lamb behind the victorious knight, is certainly suggestive of a mythical interpreta-

tion, and reminds us of the banner of St. Erie, so treasured by the ancient Swedes, and stored in the cathedral at Upsala, which bore on one side, in gold embroidery, a lamb and a dragon.

There is another legend connected with Linton, of exceeding interest. It is sometimes interwoven with that of the Worm, and, though I am informed that in its more correct form it stands alone, I may perhaps be pardoned for a little discursiveness if I pause to relate it. The church is built on a little knoll of fine compact sand, without any admixture of stone, or even pebbles, and widely differing from the soil of the neighbouring heights. The sand has nowhere hardened into stone, yet the particles are so coherent, that the sides of newly-opened graves appear smooth as a wall, and this to the depth of fifteen feet. This singular phenomenon is thus accounted for on the spot:

Many ages ago a young man killed a priest in this place, and was condemned to suffer death for murder and sacrilege. His doom seemed inevitable, but powerful intercession was made for him, especially by his two sisters, who were fondly attached to their brother. At last his life was granted him, on condition that the sisters should sift as much sand as would form a mound on which to build a church. The maidens joyfully undertook the task, and their patience did not fail. They completed it, and the church was built, though it is added that one of the sisters died immediately after her brother's liberation, either from the effects of past fatigue or overpowering joy. Such is the version of the legend, deemed the correct one at Linton. The villagers point to the sandy knoll in confirmation of its truth, and show a hollow place a short distance to the westward as that from which the sand was taken.

Whether dragon-stories extend further into Scotland I cannot say, further than that one is current at Strathmartin, in Forfar. There stands in that village a large stone, called Martin's Stone; and it is said to commemorate the victory of a champion named Martin over a dragon which had devoured nine maidens successively, as they went out one after another on a Sunday evening to fetch water for their father from the spring. Certainly these tales appear circumscribed within a narrow district. I cannot hear of anything analogous to them in the South of England, and the dragon-stories of Sweden and Norway are of a somewhat different character. There we find these monsters inhabiting dens and holes in the earth, where they brood over the treasures they have collected from the bottom of the sea. Such a monster dwells under the foundations of Ayers Church, gloating over his stores of precious things. Others have issued forth occasionally from Dragon's Hole on Storoe in Aadal, from the Dragon's Hill on Rasvog, and other places; but we hear nothing of champions combating with them. There is a tradition, however, that a priest named Anders Madsen, who lived about the year 1631, shot the dragon which brooded over a hoard of silver in the so-called Dragon Mount near the Tvedevaud.[1]

From our point of view, in the nineteenth century, it is perhaps impossible to discover what local circumstances fixed the idea of dragon-foe and conquering champion so strongly in the popular mind of one especial district. It is, of course, one which meets us again and again in almost every form of belief which has prevailed in the world. Classic mythology tells us of Cadmus and the Dragon, Apollo and Python, Her-

[1] Thorpe's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 32.

cules and the Hydra, with many more. Brahminism hands down from its earliest days the wonderful picture of Krishna suffering and Krishna triumphant—a two-fold representation, wherein the hero is first bound in the serpent's coils, and wounded by it in the heel, and then stands forth its conqueror with his foot set upon its head. And the mythology of our own Teuton fore-fathers shows us the heroic Sigurd and the fiery dragon Fafner. Surely, in these and a thousand more such instances, the ceaseless universal strife between good and evil, once shown to human eyes in its intensity upon Mount Calvary, is faintly shadowed forth with more or less of truth and clearness!

## CHAPTER IX.

### OCCULT POWERS AND SYMPATHIES.

Seventh Sons or 'Marcoux'—Twins—Aërial Appearances—The Schoolboy and Neville's Cross—Sympathy between Bees and their Owners—The Old Woman and Spider.

Among occult powers exercised, or thought to be exercised, by certain members of the human race, none have been more widely credited than those supposed to reside in seventh sons. The seventh of a family of sons, no daughters intervening, has the reputation of healing scrofula and other kindred complaints with the touch. This belief has been universal in Great Britain as well as in France, and it still crops out here and there. In the village of Ideford, in South Devon, lived (perhaps still lives) a respectable farmer, who claimed to heal as a seventh son, and patients resorted to him from Exeter, Torquay, and other places at some little distance. The French name for such a person is a '*marcou*,' and the Orléannais is the district where the belief in their powers is the strongest. 'If a man is the seventh son of his father, no female intervening, he is a *marcou*; he has on some part of his body the mark of a fleur-de-lis, and, like the King of France, he has the power of curing the king's-evil. All that is necessary to effect a cure is, that the *marcou* should breathe upon the part affected, or that the sufferer should touch the mark of the fleur-de-lis.' Of all the *marcoux* of the Orléannais, he of Ormes

is the best known and most celebrated. Every year, from twenty, thirty, forty leagues around, crowds of patients come to visit him. . . . . The *marcou* of Ormes is a cooper in easy circumstances, being the possessor of a horse and carriage. His name is Foulon, and in this country he is known by the appellation of '*Le beau marcou.*' He has the fleur-de-lis on his left side.[1] On the Borders the sign of the seven stars marks the seventh son to be a channel of healing. If seventh sons thus marked are brought up as doctors, they are in great requisition; in any case, people resort to them to be touched for the king's-evil. The belief in their powers holds its ground firmly in the Western Highlands. There the seventh son lays his hand on the party affected, commonly, but not always, uttering an invocation to the Trinity. In the island of Lewes he gives the patient a sixpenny-piece with a hole in it, through which a string is passed to wear round the neck. Should this be taken off, a return of the malady may be looked for. Dr. Mitchell adds, that when seven sons are born in succession, the parents consider themselves bound, if possible, to bring up the seventh for a doctor. Seventh sons are also seers, and have the privilege, if such it be, of second-sight. Their healing powers are, on the Borders, shared with twins and children born with cauls; but, in all these cases, the virtue is held to be so much subtracted from their own vital energy, and, if much drawn upon, they pine away and die of exhaustion. As to twins, a strong sympathy is believed to exist between them, so that what gives pain or pleasure to the one, is suffered or enjoyed by the other as well. Should one die however, the other, though weakly before, will at

[1] *Choice Notes.*—FOLK-LORE, p. 59.

once improve in health and strength, the life and vital energy of his fellow being added to his own.

This curious belief recalls to the memory how, in Spenser's 'Faerie Queene,' Agapé, the mother of three brave knights,

> Borne of one mother in one happie mold,
> Borne at one burden in one happié morne,

visits the three Fates, that she may learn the length of her sons' lives; and finding the thread of their existence

> 'So thin as spiders' frame,
> And eke so short that seemed their ends out shortly came,'

finding also that no prayer of hers could avail to lengthen their allotted span, she asked and obtained the following request:

> 'Then since,' quoth she, the 'terme of each man's life,
> For nought may lessened nor enlarged be;
> Grant this: that when ye shred with fatall knife
> His life, which is the eldest of the three,
> Which is of them the shortest, as I see,
> Eft soones his life may pass into the next;
> And when the next shall likewise ended bee,
> That both their lives may likewise be annext
> Unto the third, that his may so be trebly wext.'[1]

There is a strong tendency in the 'North Countrie' to connect the past and the present external nature, and the history and destiny of man. Thus the aurora borealis is still well known there as 'the Derwentwater Lights,' in consequence of having been particularly red and vivid at the time of that unfortunate nobleman's execution. The death of Louis XVI. was foreshadowed, too, by the aurora borealis; and myriads of fighting men were seen in the sky night after night, all through

[1] Book iv. Canto 2.

the county of Durham, before the French Revolution. The Rev. Henry Humble informs me that he has heard people declare that they had distinctly heard the cries of the combatants and groans of the wounded. Again, I am told that, a little before the rising of either 1715 or 1745, there were seen appearances in the sky as of encountering armies; which were, however, subsequently explained by a refraction in the atmosphere, causing something like the Fata Morgana. A few Jacobite gentlemen raised certain troops of horse, and exercised them on some of the high ground in Lancashire, and these being seen reflected in the clouds, formed the apparition. Still, without doubt, wars have been ushered in by such aërial appearances. Armies were seen contending in the clouds before the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as before the Battle of Ivry, and the persecutions of the Waldenses in the seventeenth century.

But further: our great battles leave an abiding impress on the imagination and heart of the Northern. Witness the following incident, which occurred to my fellow-worker herself. She was teaching in a Sunday-school in the city of Durham, and the chapter (from the First Book of Samuel) having being duly read in class, one of the pupils observed that he did not like that chapter as well as last Sunday's, because there were no battles in it. On this the teacher thought fit to dilate on the blessings of peace and the horrors of war; to all which, like a truculent young Northern as he was, the boy turned a deaf ear, only observing that there had been a great battle close to Durham once. 'And where was it fought?' asked she. 'At Neville's Cross,' answered the lad, promptly. 'I go there very often of an evening to see the place; and if you walk nine times round the Cross, and then stoop down and lay your head

to the turf, you'll hear the noise of the battle and the clash of the armour.' These were the young fellow's exact words. The walking round the Cross I believe to be purely local; but the sites of other great battles of the world are in like manner haunted by echoes of the fight; and the Northamptonshire peasants on Naseby field, and the Greek shepherd on the plains of Marathon, alike listen for them with thrilling heart.

I may, perhaps, allude here to the sympathy supposed to exist between bees and their owners, a belief in which seems to have extended over every part of our island. It is said here and there that bees will not thrive in a quarrelsome family; that if a swarm alight on a dead tree there will be a death in the owner's house within a year; that stolen bees never thrive; and, above all, that on the death of the master, or indeed of any member of his family, the bees will desert their hives, unless some one takes the house-key, raps with it three times on the board that supports the hives, informs the bees what has taken place, and fastens a bit of black crape to the hive. In '*Choice Notes*—FOLK-LORE,'[1] we read of this belief in Lincolnshire, Oxford, Surrey, and Sussex, as well as in other parts of England. I know it is in full force in Devonshire, and a Yorkshire lady writes thus: 'When I came to F——, in 1847, everything was much as it had been when my husband's mother was living. She had not then been dead a year. In the garden I noticed a row of bee *skeps*, to which were attached one or two pieces of black crape. The hives were empty. On inquiry, one of the servants said, "Ah! the bees are all flown, ma'am; they are offended because none of the family went to tell them of the mistress's death. I suppose the

[1] Pages 208-214.

young ladies did not think of such things, and though I put the bits of mourning on them, they all went away."'

Precisely the same belief holds in North Germany, where they also maintain, that when the master of the house dies, some one must go into the garden and shake the trees, saying, 'The master is dead,—the master is dead,' else they will all decay.

One or two instances, in which popular belief glorifies the world around us with light borrowed from the days when Our Saviour walked on earth, have been given already. One of exceeding beauty has recently come before me. In the little town of Malton, in Yorkshire, about nine years ago, my friend the Rev. J. B. Dykes, now vicar of St. Oswald's, Durham, while visiting an old woman during her last illness, observed a spider near her bed, and attempted to destroy it. She at once interfered, and told him with much earnestness that spiders ought not to be killed; for we should remember how, when our Blessed Lord lay in the manger at Bethlehem, the spider came and spun a beautiful web, which protected the innocent Babe from all the dangers which surrounded Him. The old woman was about ninety years of age. I have never met with the legend elsewhere.

## CHAPTER X.

### HAUNTED SPOTS.

Cleveland Stories—The Farmer and Old Nannie—Mines Haunted—The Old Lady of Littledean—The Bow-brig Ladies—Durham Haunted Spots—Yorkshire Ditto—Sir Walter Calverley—Haunted Houses in Durham and Northumberland—Appearance at Ripon—Madame Gould—North Devon Tales.

THE universal voice of mankind has ever pointed out certain places as the borderland between the material and the spiritual world—has, truly or falsely, indicated deserted houses, marshy wastes, lonely roads, spots where enormous crimes have been perpetrated, and so forth, as haunted. In general, places which once were closely connected with man, but are now deserted by him, are thus distinguished in the popular mind, rather than those which have always been barren and desolate. It is natural, then, that with a past rich in historic incidents of the wildest kind, we have many haunted spots in the North. Mr. J. M. Tweddell writes to me, respecting Cleveland, that every old castle and ruined monastery there has its legend of a subterranean passage leading therefrom, which some one has penetrated to a certain distance, and has seen an iron chest, supposed to be full of gold, on which was perched a raven. This raven points out, he considers, the Scandinavian origin of the legend. Lexhoe, near Stokesley, was haunted. The history of the place is thus recorded by the same hand :—

An old woman of Lexhoe appeared after her death to a farmer of the place, and informed him that, beneath a certain tree in his apple orchard, he would find a hoard of gold and silver which she had buried there. He was to take a spade and dig it up, keep the silver for his trouble, but give the gold to a niece of hers who was then living in great poverty, and whose place of abode she pointed out. At daybreak, after his dream or vision, the farmer went to the spot indicated, dug, and found the treasure, but kept it all to himself, though the sum allotted to him was considerable, and might have satisfied him. From that day, however, he never knew rest or happiness. Though a sober man before, he took to drinking, but all in vain—his conscience gave him no rest. Every night, at home or abroad, old Nanny's ghost failed not to dog his steps, and reproach him with his faithlessness. At last, one Saturday evening, the neighbours heard him returning from Stokesley Market very late; his horse was galloping furiously, and as he left the high road to go into the lane which led to his own house, he never stopped to open the gate at the entrance of the lane, but cleared it with a bound. As he passed a neighbour's house, its inmates heard him screaming out, 'I will—I will—I will!' and looking out, they saw a little old woman in black, with a large straw hat on her head, whom they recognised as old Nannie, seated behind the terrified man on the runaway nag, and clinging to him closely. The farmer's hat was off, his hair stood on end, as he fled past them, uttering his fearful cry, 'I will—I will—I will!' But when the horse reached the farm all was still, for the rider was a corpse!

Mines have ever been supposed to be haunted; nor can we wonder at it, considering the many unearthly sounds constantly to be heard there—'the dripping of water

down the shafts, the tunnelling of distant passages, the rumbling of trains from some freshly-explored lode,' and all received upon the ear in gloom and often in solitude. The following instance, told by a miner on his sick-bed to his clergyman, is recorded in 'Communications with the Unseen World' (page 121): 'The overseer of the mine he had been used to work in (at Whitehaven) for many years, was a Cumberland man; but being found guilty of some unfair proceedings, he was dismissed by the proprietors from his post, though employed in an inferior situation. The new overseer was a Northumberland man, who had the burr that distinguishes that county very strongly. To this person the degraded overseer bore the strongest hatred, and was heard to say that some day he would be his ruin. He lived, however, in apparent friendship with him; but one day they were both destroyed together by the firedamp. It was believed in the mine that, preferring revenge to life, the ex-overseer had taken his successor, less acquainted than himself with the localities of the mine, into a place where he knew the firedamp to exist, and that without a safety-lamp; and had thus contrived his destruction. But ever after that time, in the place where the two men perished, their voices might be heard high in dispute, the Northumbrian burr being distinctly audible, and so also the well-known pronunciation of the treacherous murderer.' Compare with this incident the following communication from the Rev. S. Baring-Gould: 'I know a man who is haunted by two spectres. He has shaking fits, during which his eyes wander about the room; then he sees the ghosts. He was a miner, and is said to have half-cut through the rope when some men against whom he bore a grudge were going down the pit; the rope broke, and they were dashed to pieces.

Their ghosts haunt him night and day, and he can never remain long in one house, or endure to be alone night or day.'

Mr. Wilkie relates a story somewhat similar to that given above from Cleveland, but with a happier termination. It runs as follows: 'The old tower of Littledean, on the Tweed side, had long been haunted by the spirit of an old lady, once its mistress, who had been a covetous, grasping woman, and oppressive to the poor. Tradition averred that she had amassed a large sum of money by thrift or extortion, and now could not rest in her grave because of it. Spite of its ghost, however, Littledean Tower was inhabited by a laird and his family, who found no fault with their place of abode, and were not much troubled by thoughts of the supernatural world. One Saturday evening, however, a servant-girl, who was cleaning shoes in the kitchen by herself, suddenly observed an elf-light shining on the floor. While she gazed on it, it disappeared, and in its place stood an old woman wrapped in a brown cloak, who muttered something about being cold, and asked to warm herself at the fire. The girl readily consented, and seeing that her visitor's shoes were wet, and her toes peeping out blue and cold from their tips, she good-naturedly offered to dry and clean the shoes, and did so. The old lady, touched by this attention, confessed herself frankly to be the apparition that haunted the house. "My gold wud na let me rest," said she, "but I'll tell ye where it lies; 'tis 'neath the lowest step o' the Tower stairs. Take the laird there, an' tell him what I now tell ye; then dig up the treasure, and put it in his hands. An' tell him to part it in two shares: one share let him keep, for he's master here now; the other share he maun part again, and gie half to you, for ye are a kind lassie and

a true, and half he maun gie to the poor o' Maxton, the auld folk and the fatherless bairns, and them that need it most. Do this an' I sall rest in my grave, where I've no rested yet, and never will I trouble the house mair till the day o' doom." The girl rubbed her eyes, looked again, and behold the old woman was gone!

'Next morning the young servant took her master to the spot which had been indicated to her, and told him what had taken place. The stone was removed, and the treasure discovered, and divided according to the instructions given. The laird, being blessed with a goodly family of sturdy lads and smiling maidens, found no difficulty in disposing of his share. The servant-girl, so richly dowered, found a good husband ere the year had passed. The poor of Maxton, for the first time in their lives, blessed the old lady of Littledean; and never was the ancient tower troubled again by ghost or apparition.'

The same locality supplies us with another legend. About half-a-mile to the east of Maxton, a small rivulet runs across the turnpike road, at a spot called Bow-brig-syke. Near this bridge lies a triangular field, in which, for nearly a century, it was averred that the forms of two ladies, dressed in white, might be seen pacing up and down. Night after night the people of the neighbourhood used to come and watch them, and curiosity brought many from a great distance. The figures were always to be seen at dusk; they walked arm-in-arm over precisely the same spot of ground till morning light. Mr. Wilkie adds that, about twelve years before the time of his noting down the story, while some workmen were repairing the road, they took up the large flat stones upon which foot-passengers crossed the burn, and found beneath them the skeletons of two women lying side by side. After this discovery, the Bow-brig

ladies were never again seen to walk in the Three-corner-field.

Mr. Wilkie says further, that he received this account from a gentleman who saw and examined the skeletons, and who added that they were believed to be those of two ladies, sisters to a former Laird of Littledean. Their brother is said to have killed them in a fit of passion, because they interfered to protect from illusage a young lady whom he had met at Bow-brig-syke. He placed their bodies upon the bridge, and lowered the flat stones upon them to prevent discovery. Some years later he met with his own death near the same fatal spot. While riding with his dogs he fell over the brae opposite to the bridge, and was found lying dead by the Tweed side. Tradition identifies him with the Laird Harry Gilles, whose adventure in hunting has already been related.

I believe that there is firm faith in ghosts, and their power of revisiting the earth, throughout the entire county of Durham; and it is thought that a Romish priest is the proper person to lay them. The great season for their appearance is St. Thomas's eve and day, and they haunt the earth till Christmas eve, when the approaching festival, of course, puts them to flight. It was on one of these unlucky days, which happened also to be a Friday, that one of the waits disappeared at the foot of Elvet Bridge, Durham, not to be seen again; since which event the waits have never played in that city on Friday nights. On St. Thomas's eve and day, too, have carriers and waggoners been most alarmed by the ghost of the murdered woman, who was wont to haunt the path or lane between the Cradle Well and Neville's Cross. With her child dangling at her side, she used to join parties coming in or going out of Durham in

carriers' carts or waggons, would enter the vehicles and there seat herself; but always disappeared when they reached the limits of her hopeless pilgrimage.

Night after night, too, when it is sufficiently dark, the Headless Coach whirls along the rough approach to Langley Hall, near Durham, drawn by black and fiery steeds. We hear of this apparition, too, in Northumberland. 'When the death-hearse, drawn by headless horses, and driven by a headless driver, is seen about midnight, proceeding rapidly, but without noise, towards the churchyard, the death of some considerable person in the parish is sure to happen at no distant period.'[1] And it is recorded in Rees' Diary, that the death of one John Borrow, of Durham, was presaged by a vision of a coach drawn by six black swine, and driven by a black driver.

And for Yorkshire, the Rev. J. Barmby assures me that there were plenty of ghosts or bogles about the village of Melsonby, a district with which he used to be well acquainted. A well there, called the Lady Well, was haunted by a lady without a head, and Berry Well by a bogle in the form of a white goose. Not far off was a conical hill, called Diddersley Hill, on Gatherley Moor, where an old farmer declares the fairies used to dance in his young days. And near this hill an arch spanned the road, not of any great antiquity, certainly; still a mounted horseman was to be seen there in the early morning light, to the great terror of the farmers' lads who had to pass beneath, starting before dawn with carts for coals into 'Bishoprig,' *i.e.* the county of Durham.

The village of Calverley, near Bradford, in Yorkshire, has been haunted since the time of Queen Elizabeth by the apparition of Master Walter Calverley, now popularly called Sir Walter. It is averred that this man

[1] Rambles in Northumberland.

murdered his wife and children, and, refusing to plead, was subjected to the '*peine forte et dure.*' In his last agony he is said to have exclaimed, 'Them that love Sir Walter, loup on, loup on!' which accordingly became the watchword of the apparition, which frequented a lane near the village of Calverley. There is no fear, however, of meeting it at present; the ghost has been laid, and cannot reappear as long as green holly grows on the manor. My friend the Rev. J. Barmby, however, informs me that his grandfather, when a child, and riding behind his father on horseback, saw the apparition, and was terrified by it; while the father, to allay his boy's fears, said, 'It's only Sir Walter.' This Master Walter Calverley is the hero of 'The Yorkshire Tragedy,' one of the plays attributed by some to Shakespeare.

Of haunted houses we have one at Wellington Dene, another at North Shields, and a third at Chester-le-street. Crook Hall, near Durham, has its ghost, called the White Lady, and South Biddick Hall its ideal tenant, one Madame Lambton. The Rev. Henry Humble informs me that a house at Perth, let in tenements, was considered haunted on account of the strange and unaccountable sounds heard there. Sometimes music was heard, proceeding apparently from a fixed spot in the wall. It was always heard in the same place and at the same time, *i. e.* between seven and eight in the evening and one and two in the early morning, but sometimes for a longer, sometimes for a shorter, period of time. Again, there were unaccountable rappings and knockings by unknown hands. The only thing alleged in explanation was, that a former proprietor and inhabitant of the house was a very wicked man.

From the Rev. J. F. Bigge I learn a few particulars

respecting another haunted house—Dalton Hill Head, once belonging to the family of Hedley, of Newcastle, but purchased from them by Mr. Collingwood, of Dissington. Some years ago a woman, named Mary Henderson (a connexion, it appears, of George Stephenson the engineer), had sole charge of the house; but the gardener lived closed by, and kept a mastiff, called 'Ball.' Against the advice of the gardener, she pried into a hidden closet, and discovered in it a quantity of children's bones, some in hat-boxes, some wrapped in articles of clothing. She begged for the dog as a companion through the night, closed the house, and went to bed, but was soon awoke by strange sounds of dancing and singing upstairs. Being a bold woman, she got up to investigate into the matter, but the dog was terrified, and unwilling to accompany her. She took him in her arms, and went round the house. All was still and empty, but an attic window stood open. We are not informed whether the disturbances continued after this investigation.

One of my clerical friends, an incumbent in Yorkshire, has been good enough to communicate to me a family legend of an apparition witnessed by one of his aunts, and often told by her. This lady used, when a girl, to visit at the house of a gentleman near Ripon, and on one occasion, when about thirteen or fourteen years old, was spending the afternoon there. She was playing in the garden with his children, young people of about her own age, when one of them exclaimed, 'Why, there is brother —— walking at the bottom of the garden.' She looked up, and recognised the form and features of the young man, who was then in India. His figure appeared with perfect distinctness upon a gravel path which led round the garden, but not to any other place. One of the children, a young girl, ran into

the house and told her father what they had seen. He bade her run away and go on playing—it must be a mistake. However, he took out his watch, noted the time, and wrote down the day and hour. When the next Indian mail arrived, it brought intelligence of his son's death, at the very time when the children had seen his 'eidolon' in the garden.

Through the kindness of the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, I am enabled to conclude my series of apparitions and haunted houses with the account of one which though from another part of England, is of such exceeding interest that I am much gratified with the permission to record it in these pages as I received it from his pen :—

'Lewtrenchard House is haunted by a White Lady, who goes by the name of Madame Gould, and is supposed to be the spirit of a lady who died there—like Queen Elizabeth, seated in her chair—in the middle of the last century. Her maiden name was Belfield, and she married William Drake Gould, son of Henry Gould and Elizabeth, only child of a Drake of Littleham.

'Before the late alterations in Lew House, there was a corridor extending the whole length of the upper story of the house; along this the lady was supposed to walk at night, and her step was frequently heard.

'My mother has often told me how she has heard the step at night, as though proceeding from high-heeled shoes, walking slowly up the corridor, and thinking it might be my father coming to bed, she has opened the door to admit him; but on looking out, she has seen the moon streaming in through the windows on an empty passage, down which she still heard the measured tread. My sister often expressed her desire to hear the steps of the spectral lady, but was still disappointed, though she sat up on purpose.

'One summer night, however, she was sitting in her room, with window and door open, writing a letter, and thinking of anything but the old Madame, when she heard steps along the corridor. At the moment she thought it might be my father, and she rose, took up her candle, and went to the door to speak to him. To her surprise she saw no one, but the steps passed her, and went on into the lumber-room at the end of the passage. Being a resolute and courageous young lady, she followed the sound into the room, but could see no one. She also opened the only other door beyond her own, and which gave admittance to one of the servants' rooms, to ascertain whether the noise could have proceeded thence, but she found the two maids fast asleep.

'At the end of the house is a long oak-tree avenue; the White Lady is said to have been seen pacing up and down this, gleaming in and out among the gnarled tree-trunks, as she passed into the moonlight or disappeared in the shade.

'About three miles off is a quaint old granite mansion, half pulled down by my grandfather, and turned into a substantial farmhouse. The old hall, now converted into a granary, and reduced half its original height, contains still a seven-light window, and three granite fireplaces. This ancient house belonged originally to the Woods, and there was a standing feud between that family and my own, till they were ruined, and Madame Gould bought the land and house from them; after which she declared she should die happy.

'On the confines of this property, called Orchard, is a deep gloomy valley, through which trickles a rill of dark water, under the shadow of the thick fir plantations which clothe the sides of the glen. It goes by the name of the Black Valley, and the Bratton-Clovelly road

plunges down into it, crosses a little bridge, and scrambles up the opposite side through the gloom of the overhanging trees. On the side of the road is an old mine-shaft, long abandoned. It is confidently asserted by Lew and Bratton people that, on dark nights, Madame Gould is to be seen, dressed all in white, standing by the side of the stream, with a phosphorescent light streaming from her face and her clothes; and that she stoops and takes up handfuls of water, which she allows to trickle down in sparkling drops through her fingers. Sometimes she combs her long brown floating hair with a silver comb; and many a Bratton man, returning from market, has seen her and been nearly frightened out of his wits. Not many years ago, a man of that village had his leg broken by falling over a hedge, in his attempt to escape from the apparition, as it issued from the old mining-shaft and made towards him.

'A young man, named Symmonds, living at Holdstrong, a farm in the parish, left home for America during the old Madame's lifetime. After some years he returned, and hiring a horse at Tavistock, he rode home, a distance of twelve miles. It was a clear moonlight night, and as he passed through the Lew Valley, with the white rime lying thick on the grass, he noticed a newly-ploughed field, in which the plough had been left. On this was seated a lady in white satin, with long brown hair floating down her shoulders. Her face was uplifted, and her eyes directed towards the moon, so that Mr. Symmonds had a full view of it. He recognised her at once, and taking off his hat, he called out, "I wish you a very good night, Madame." She bowed in return, and waved her hand, the man noticing the sparkle of her diamond rings as she did so. On reaching home, after the first greetings and congratulations, he said to his

aged parents, "What do you think now? I have seen that strange Madame Gould sitting on a plough, this time o' night, and with frost on the ground, looking at the moon." All who heard him started, and a blank expression passed over their countenances. The young man, seeing that he had surprised them more than he anticipated, asked what was the matter. The reply was, "Madame was buried three days ago in Lew Church."'

It must be noticed that a belief connected with the appearance of spirits, up to the third day after death or burial, is very ancient. S. Macarius the Younger, of Alexandria (A.D. 373), thus speaks: 'On the third day, the oblation having been made in the church, the alleviation of its pain, which it underwent through separation from the body, the departed soul . . . . . receives good hope. For two days it was permitted to the soul to wander about on the earth at its will. Wherefore the soul, enthralled with love to its body, sometimes haunts the mansion wherein it had dwelt, sometimes the sepulchre in which its body is laid, and thus for two days it seeks, as it were, its part, in seeking its corpse.'

But to return to the subject under consideration.

'An old woman once entered the orchard near Lew Church, and seeing the trees laden with apples, she shook some down and filled her pockets, keeping one in her hand to eat. She then turned to the gate into the road, but suddenly there flashed before her in the way the figure of the old Madame in white, pointing to the apple. The poor woman in an agony of terror cast it away, and fled across the orchard to a gap in the hedge on the opposite side; but at the moment she reached it, the figure of the White Lady appeared standing in the

gap, looking at her sternly, and pointing to her pocket. It was not till the old goody had emptied it of the stolen apples that the spectre vanished.

'Old Lewtrenchard Church was handsomely furnished with a carved oak screen and bench-ends. Six of these ends alone remain. They are of excellent workmanship: one representing St. Michael weighing souls, one a lady's portrait in a medallion, with a jester in cap and bells in a niche beneath it, another a gentleman's portrait with an old battlemented gateway beneath it. The other bench-ends bear shields with the emblems of the Passion upon them. My grandfather, with intent to 'beautify' the church, removed all the benches, cut down the screen and burnt it for firewood, and filled the church with neat deal pews of various shapes and sizes.

'The carpenter who was employed to effect these changes, before leaving his work one evening, out of curiosity, opened the vault in which lay William Drake Gould and his lady. Finding the lady's coffin-lid loose, he proceeded to raise it, that he might take a look at the redoubted Madame. Immediately she opened her eyes, sat up, and rose to her feet. The carpenter, who was an elderly man, frightened out of his senses, rushed from the church, which was filled with light from the body of the risen lady. As the man dashed down the churchyard avenue he turned his head back, and saw her over his shoulder gleaming in the porch, and preparing to sail down the path after him.

'From the church to his house was a good mile and a quarter, and the road passes nearly all the way through woods. He ran as he never ran before, and as he ran his shadow went before him, cast by the light which shone from the spectral lady who followed him. On

reaching his house he burst the door open, and dashed into bed beside his wife, who was infirm and bedridden. Both then saw the figure standing in the doorway, and the light from it was so intense that, to use the old woman's words, she could see by it a pin lying on the floor.

'There is a stone shown on the "ramps" of Lew Slate Quarry, where seven parsons met to lay the old Madame. Opinions differ as to what took place—whether she was laid in part or not at all. Some say that the white owl, which nightly flits to and fro in front of Lew House, is the spirit of the lady conjured by the parsons into a bird; others doubt this; but I believe all agree that the parsons failed because one of the number was "a bit fresh" when he came, and had forgotten the right words to be used.

'I have not the smallest doubt in my own mind that this history is in its essentials of very great antiquity; that the apparition is really an ancient white lady, who has suffered anthropomorphosis, and become Madame Gould; the same stories and the same superstitions having been rife ages before the birth of the lady to whom they have now been applied.

'In many points Madame Gould strongly resembles the German Dame Holle: such as her connexion with water and her silver comb, as well as the appearance to the apple-picker. Holle or Holdar, in Germany, is a very beautiful white lady with long flowing hair of a golden hue; she haunts fountains and streams, and is often engaged in washing. She is well disposed, and rebukes bad children, punishing theft and other faults. Her dress is white with a golden girdle, and she is radiant with light. She is an ancient Teutonic goddess. Curiously enough, also, she lives in mountains, and

issues luminous from the mouth of caves, just as Madame Gould appeared to the man from the old mine-shaft. In one account of the apparition which I obtained, Madame Gould was expressly said to have appeared with golden hair; whereas her portrait represents her as a very beautiful woman, with long brown hair floating down her back.

'I have given these stories of the old Madame with some fulness, because I believe her to be unquestionably an ancient Saxon goddess, who has fallen from her pedestal, and undergone anthropomorphosis and localization; and such instances, though not uncommon in Norway or Germany, are rare in England.'

Devonshire is no doubt a land of ghost stories. I remember how racily some of them were told by an old clergyman of that county with whose family my own is connected. One was of a young lady in North Devon, whose father had been carried off by smugglers, kept a prisoner for a 'year and a day,' and only released on payment of a large sum of money. He did not long survive his restoration to his home, and his daughter, an only child and motherless, soon followed him to the grave, worn out by that year of loneliness and suspense. But she did not rest there; her spirit haunted the neighbouring town, a straggling fishing-place, whose inhabitants were supposed to be implicated in the abduction of her father. Her mode of punishing them was peculiar. She would flit from house to house on Sunday morning, while the dinners were cooking, and, laying her cold hand on the meat, would taint it, so that it became absolutely uneatable. Another story was related, to account for the peculiar shape of the dining-room in a certain Dartmoor vicarage, and was to this effect:—

Some years back a clergyman, on taking possession of a living on the confines of Dartmoor, found it necessary to enlarge the house, which was really little better than the peasants' cottages around it. He lengthened the one sitting-room, and made it into a tolerable dining-room, and added a drawing-room and two or three bedrooms. These improvements satisfied his wife and children; but there was one interested party whom he had left out of consideration—the spirit of his predecessor, an old gentleman who had outlived all his family, and passed many solitary years in the remote parsonage.

And soon the consequences of this neglect appeared. Sounds were soon heard of an evening, as though a figure in a dressing-gown were sweeping in and out of the rooms, and treading with a soft yet heavy tread, and this particularly in the dining-room, where the old vicar had spent the last years of his life, sitting over the fire, or pacing up and down in his dressing-gown and slippers. The eerie sounds began at nightfall and continued at intervals till morning. Uneasiness pervaded the household. Servants gave warning and went away; no one applied for their vacant places. The daughters fell ill, and were sent away for change of air; then their mother was anxious about them, and went to see how they were going on; and so the Vicar was left alone, at the mercy of his predecessor's ghost. At first he bore up bravely, but one Saturday night, while he was sitting up late, and wearily going over his Sunday sermons, the 'pad, pad' of the measured tread struck so painfully upon his nerves, that he could bear it no longer. He started up, opened the window, jumped out, and made the best of his way to the nearest farm, where lived his churchwarden, an honest Dartmoor farmer.

There the Vicar found a kind welcome; and when he told his tale, in a hesitating sort of way, owning his dislike to solitude, and apologising for the weakness of nerves which made him fancy he heard the sounds so often described to him, his host broke in with a declaration of his belief that the old Vicar was at the bottom of it, just because of the alterations in the house he had lived in so many years. 'He never could abide changes,' pursued the farmer, 'but he's had his day, and you should have yours now. He must be laid, that's certain; and if you'll go away next week, and see your missis and the young ladies, I'll see to it.'

And see to it he did. A jury of seven parsons was convoked, and each sat for half-an-hour with a candle in his hand, and it burned out its time with each, showing plainly that none of them could lay the ghost. Nor was this any wonder, for were they not all old acquaintances of his, so that he knew all their tricks? The spirit could afford to defy them; it was not worth his while to blow their candles out. But the seventh parson was a stranger, and a scholar fresh from Oxford. In his hand the light went out at once. He was clearly the man to lay the ghost, and he did not shrink from his task; he laid it at once, and in a beer-barrel.

But now a fresh difficulty arose. What was to be done with the beer-barrel and its mysterious tenant? Where could it be placed secure from the touch of any curious hand, which might be tempted to broach the barrel, and set free the ghost? Nothing occurred to the assembled company but to roll the beer-barrel into one corner, and send for the mason to enclose it with stones and mortar. This done, the room looked very odd with one corner cut off. Uniformity would be attained if the other three corners were filled up as well; and besides,

the ghost would be safer if no one knew the very corner in which he was reposing. So the other corners were blocked up, and with success. What matters it if the room be smaller!—the parsonage has never been haunted since.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DREAMS.

Dreams presaging Death—Dead Bodies Discovered through Dreams—Visions—The Bodach Glas—Second-sight.

Of dreams which convey an intimation either of what is actually taking place at a great distance, or of future events, many instances have been recorded, and many are treasured in the memory of different families through this as well as other countries. Where such dreams and their fulfilment are well accredited we cannot disbelieve them; nor do I know why we should be desirous to do so, since we know from Scripture that dreams have been used as the vehicle of intercourse between the visible and the invisible worlds. Some dreams worthy of note are scattered through these pages; a few others, chiefly warnings of death, remain to be recorded.

The first was related to me by a clerical friend, who knew the persons concerned in it and heard it from them. Three brothers, whom we will call Charles, James, and Edward, lived in different parts of one of the northern counties of England. Edward, on awaking one morning, was surprised to find his wife still in bed, and asked why she was not getting up as usual. She said that she was quite unnerved by a terrible dream, and must wait a little to recover herself. At first he laughed at her fears, but seeing that she was really in distress, inquired what the dream had been. His wife told him that she had seen

him with his two brothers, Charles and James, standing in earnest conversation on a grass-plot. Meanwhile, a young man then dead, but formerly in the employment of Edward, came towards them with a paper in his hand, much crossed and blotted over. The ground suddenly opened, James fell into the chasm and disappeared. 'You and Charles,' said the poor wife, 'would press to the margin of the dangerous pit to see what had become of him, and I was endeavouring to keep you back.' While she was uttering these words the sound of a horse galloping into the courtyard roused her husband. He went to the window, threw it up, and asked what was the matter. The reply was 'Come over directly to ——. Your brother, Mr. James B——, is just dead.' It appeared afterwards that Mr. James B—— had been in his usual health till about three o'clock that morning, when he was seized with violent internal pains and died in a few minutes.

The wife, who related this to my informant, dwelt a good deal on the appearance in her dream of the young man lately in her husband's employ, saying he had once before appeared to her in a dream which had been duly fulfilled. During an absence of her husband, she had been much alarmed by a report that the vessel by which he had sailed for London was lost, but she had been reassured by a dream in which this young man had told her he was safe and would write to her within three days, which came to pass accordingly.

A very touching dream, also a portent of death, has been thus reported to me on credible authority. It is said to have occurred some years ago in the family of an Irish Bishop. A little boy came downstairs one morning, saying, 'Oh, mamma, I have had such a nice dream; somebody gave me such a pretty box, and I am sure it

was for me, for there was my name on it. Look, it was just like this,' and taking up a slate and pencil the child drew the shape of a coffin. The parents gazed at one another in alarm, not lessened by the gambols of the child, who frolicked about in high health and spirits. The father was obliged to go out that morning, but he begged the mother to keep the child in her sight through the day. She did so, till on dressing to go out in her carriage, the little boy slipped away to the stables, where he begged the coachman to take him by his side while he drove to the house-door, a thing he had often done before. On this occasion, however, the horses were restive, the driver lost control over them, and the child was flung off and killed on the spot.

Another dream, which has always appeared to me very remarkable, I give in the words of the late Rev. Dawson Warren, vicar of Edmonton, a clergyman with whose family I am closely connected. He recorded it on the authority of his mother, a lady of considerable sense and talents, who had seen the documents upon which its truth was substantiated, and who fully believed it. The dreamer, the Rev. Jacob Duché, a chaplain in America at the time of the Revolutionary War, was compelled to take refuge in England, but returned to his home and family on the re-establishment of peace. When Mr. Duché was returning to America to rejoin his family, and was about halfway across the Atlantic, he dreamed one night that he had landed, arrived in Philadelphia, and was hastening to his home. His house-door appeared to be open; he thought that he ran into his study, and that he found sitting in his own chair his wife, wringing her hands and lamenting the death of their favourite son. She seemed to tell him the painful

particulars, and then his grief awakened him. He related his dream to his fellow-passengers and to the captain of the ship, and was so deeply impressed by the circumstance, that he wrote out a full account of it, and got it attested by their signatures. On his arrival at Philadelphia, he hastened to his house; he found the door open, he flew to his study, he found his wife sitting in his chair, and in an agony of grief she told him of the death of their beloved son, which had taken place at the very time of the dream.

A remarkable discovery of a dead body by a dream took place in our own country in the year 1848, and was narrated in the papers of the day. Mr. Smith, gardener to Sir Clifford Constable, was supposed to have fallen into the Tees, his hat and stick having been found near the waterside, and the river was dragged for some time but without success. A person named Awde, from Little Newsham, a small village four miles from Wycliffe, then dreamt that poor Smith was lying under the ledge of a certain rock about 300 yards below Whorlton Bridge, and that his right arm was broken. The dream so affected this man, that he got up early and set out at once to search the river. He went to the boat-house, told his story to the person in charge there, and asked for the boat. He rowed to the spot he had seen in his dream, and on the first trial he made with the boat-hook, he drew up the body of the drowned man, and found the right arm actually broken.

The Rev. Henry Humble parallels this history with one from Cornwall which came to his own knowledge. A lady of Truro dreamed the night before a boating-party that the boat was upset, and she herself drowned. She therefore determined not to join it, and sent an excuse. The party returned safely, however, and the lady,

after telling a friend what had passed, and describing where she had dreamt that the body would be found, ceased to think of the matter. A month or two later the lady had occasion to cross the Truro river at King Harry's Passage—the boat was upset—she was drowned, and they sought for the body in vain. Then the friend to whom she had told her dream came forward and pointed out the spot marked out in that dream as the body's resting-place, and there it was found.

Of visions or waking-dreams, two very interesting ones have been communicated to me by the gentleman to whom these pages are so largely indebted, the Rev. S. Baring-Gould. I give them in his own words :—'An old woman, Widow Freeman, lived at Horbury some years ago, and is there buried. She was a most devout and earnest churchwoman, a frequent communicant, and regular at daily matins. She often had visions, one of which was as follows: The old woman was sitting in her cottage, reading her Bible or Prayer Book, when a sudden blaze of light filled the room, and on looking up the whole chamber was illumined with dazzling white glory. Numerous white doves were flitting about, flashing in the light, winnowing the air with their wings, and encircling the widow. She observed that their beaks (nibbs she called them) were steeped in blood, and they dropped the blood upon her. In another moment they vanished, but the light became painfully dazzling, and in the midst of it stood Our Lord displaying His five wounds. She was left in a state of overwhelming joy, and could not restrain herself from relating what she had seen to some of her neighbours and to the parish priest; but she had a strong aversion to relating it to anyone who did not believe in the supernatural, lest, as she termed

it, she should be "giving that which is holy unto dogs, and casting pearls before swine."

'Another Horbury woman, of a different character from Widow Freeman, and by no means so attentive to her religious duties, had a vision whilst engaged in her work this month (November, 1865). She saw suddenly before her a monstrous and very terrible beast "summat like a padfoit," and she was "right fleyed to see 't;" it had great goggle e'en and a mouth ravening for blood. It seemed about to rush upon her and rend her in pieces, when a hand appeared marked with blood, and this hand smote the beast, and it fled with a bellow that shook the house.'

The following dream recorded by the same hand is very remarkable: 'A man at ——, in Lincolnshire, known for his drunken and disorderly life, had a dream. He thought that he was driving down a winding lane on a dark night. He heard footsteps behind him and turned to look, but could only discern a dark figure approaching, without being able to see the face. The stranger came up with the cart, and the driver saw that he was dressed in a long dark cloak. Suddenly the foot-traveller threw open the cloak, and asked to be received into the cart, and by the wounds in His hands the poor man recognised "his dear Saviour." Before he answered the man awoke. For some time he lived a better life, but gradually relapsed, and before the year was out had become worse than ever. Then he dreamt again. He was driving down the same dark lane, but no footsteps sounded behind him. He looked round. At that moment the cart was upset, he fell into a ditch full of fire, and awoke with a scream, wafting the flames from his mouth. A few nights after the wretched man left a publichouse drunk in his cart, and

was found next morning lying under his upset cart with his neck broken.'

The belief in death-omens peculiar to certain families is purely Celtic, and does not, therefore, fall within the province of Border folk-lore. Mr. Wilkie indeed mentions the Maug or May Moulach, but calls it a spirit akin to the Killmoulis, whereas it is the girl with the hairy left-hand which haunts Tulloch Gorms, and gives warning of a death in the Grant family, like the Banshee in many old houses in Ireland, the Bodca-an-Dun in the family of Rothmurchas, or the spectre of the bloody hand in that of Kinchardines. Such a prophet of death was the Bodach Glas, or dark grey man, of which Sir Walter Scott makes such effective use in Waverley towards the end of Fergus Mac Ivor's history. Its appearance foretold death in the clan of ——, and I have been informed on the most credible testimony of its appearance in our own day. The Earl of E——, a nobleman alike beloved and respected in Scotland, and whose death was truly felt as a national loss, was playing on the day of his decease on the links of St. Andrews at the national game of golf. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of a game, saying, 'I can play no longer, there is the Bodach Glas. I have seen it for the third time; something fearful is going to befall me.' He died that night at M. M——, as he was handing a candlestick to a lady who was retiring to her room. The clergyman from whom I receive this story endorses it as authentic, and names the gentleman to whom Lord E—— spoke.

I learn from another friend that this was not the first presage of impending doom vouchsafed to this nobleman. A warning of his wife's death was also granted him, and in this manner. Shortly after her confinement,

which she had passed through safely, he went from home to attend a wedding, and during his absence dreamt that he read in *The Times* newspaper an announcement of Lady E——'s death on a day not far distant. The dream affected him a good deal, and his dejection the next day was apparent to every one. He returned home, found the countess doing well, but soon after she caught cold from being moved into a damp room; illness came on, and her husband was roused up one night with tidings of her being in a dangerous state. It was the morning indicated by the dream. The earl remembered it, and rose up (as he afterwards expressed it) with a yell of agony. Before nightfall she had expired.

Second-sight, again, belongs properly to the Highlands, and accordingly lies beyond the limits I have laid down for myself in this work. Mr. Wilkié says little respecting it, except that the seventh son of seventh sons are persons marked out to be the possessors of the mysterious gift. He calls the seer an Elleree, a name I have never met elsewhere, and says that if he sees sparks of fire falling on a person, that person's death is near at hand. But the more common presage of death is for the Elleree to see the man wrapped in his shroud, and, according as the shroud covers more or less of the figure, will the death be near or remote. Again, should the Elleree see a funeral, and distinguish the persons of any of the attendants, those men are marked for an early grave.

It is to be regretted that this subject of second-sight —which, as Sir Walter Scott asserts, is attested by evidence which neither Bacon, Boyle, nor Johnson were able to resist,—has not arrested the attention of some philosophical thinker qualified to inquire into the matter,

and give what explanation may be possible. For myself, I will only relate one incident which has always appeared to me very remarkable; and professing myself wholly unable to offer any explanation, I will simply detail the circumstances, which for five-and-twenty years have been clearly imprinted on my memory.

About a quarter of a century has passed away since I started from D—— to join a party of tourists near Glasgow. We met, and determined that the gentlemen should take a walking and fishing ramble through Rossshire and Inverness-shire, while the ladies should remain at the country-house of a friend, who had already gathered round her a merry group of young people, lately set free from the restraints of school, and bent on enjoying the beauty and freedom of the Western Highlands. The walking tour over, all were to spend a few days there together before the party broke up.

Our kind hostess was the widow of a Highland chief, and was descended from a family long celebrated for possessing a more than usual portion of second-sight. She firmly believed that the prophetic mantle had fallen upon her, but her disposition was cheerful and lively, and being herself still young, she had a decided preference for the society of young people.

Her residence was situated on the slope of a steep hill, about half a mile from the side of a beautiful lake, which it overlooked. The lake was at this point a mile at least in breadth, and on its opposite shore stood a small farmhouse, with a few enclosed fields around it. The lake was several miles long, and had its egress into a river, which in winter, or when swollen by the heavy rains which are common in hilly countries, was of considerable size. The only means of crossing this river was by a stone bridge about half a mile from the end

of the lake. When I have added, that in the garden of our friend was an inclosure which had for centuries been the burying-place of her husband's clan, and in which his remains were laid, I shall have given every particular necessary for the elucidation of the rest of the tale.

A month quickly passed among the rivers and lakes of Scotland, and we found ourselves at the widow's hospitable residence. Our welcome there was kind; but before an hour had passed, we could not help noticing that a gloom hung over the party lately so merry. The conversation was evidently forced. The younger ladies looked anxious and distressed; their hostess sad, almost stern, as they sat apart, speaking little, and evidently wrapped in thought. Something unusual had plainly occurred, and we eagerly sought an evening walk with some of the younger ladies, that we might learn what had so completely transformed our hitherto cheerful hostess.

The tale we were told was, in brief, as follows. About a week previously, Mrs. F—— (as we will designate the widow) had appeared at the breakfast-table deadly pale, and with bloodshot eyes. She was reluctant to speak, and would not allow that anything was the matter, till towards evening a flood of tears relieved her, and she owned that she was distressed by a dream of the night before, so remarkable and so vivid, that she felt convinced it would be realised. She described it thus:—

Looking from the windows of her house, she had seen a long funeral procession come up the opposite side of the lake, from the direction of the river-bridge. When they reached the small farmhouse, the horses were taken out of the carriages and turned into an

inclosure to graze; the coffin was brought down to the lake-side and placed in one of the boats, while the funeral party crossed in the large ferry-boat, commonly used for conveying cattle. On reaching the shore in front of Mrs. F——'s house, the procession again formed, and proceeded to the graveyard, where the funeral took place; the earth was heaped on the grave, and the mourners departed. Without calling at the house, they recrossed the lake, harnessed their animals, and disappeared by the same road by which they had come.

On hearing this narration, the young people had ridiculed the notion of attending to the fancies of a dream, and by their bright cheerful conversation had succeeded at last in restoring Mrs. F—— to something like cheerfulness. But towards evening on the following day, a horseman rode up to the door, and delivered a note from the undertaker of an adjacent town. This note announced that Mrs. F——'s mother-in-law had died suddenly at her residence, twenty miles off, and requested that a grave should be prepared for her in the family burying-ground. On inquiry, the messenger stated that the old lady had died at an hour coincident with the remarkable dream of her daughter-in-law, after a very slight indisposition, of which, in consequence of a family disagreement, Mrs. F—— had not heard.

The whole party was struck with awe. The widow quietly observed, 'You see it is true,' and retired to her own room for the rest of the day. On the fifth day the funeral took place, actually fulfilling, contrary to all likelihood, every circumstance connected with the dream. The old lady had died at her residence, the road from which ran by the same side of the river and lake with Mrs. F——'s house; it was therefore most improbable that the funeral procession should

cross the lake. But all was to be accomplished. On the night preceding the burial a dreadful thunderstorm swept away the stone bridge, which spanned one of the mountain streams that flowed into the lake about a mile from Mrs. F——'s house. The result was, that the funeral party was unable to proceed by the road. They could not pass the stream, now a raging torrent, so they retraced their steps, and crossing the river, continued their journey on the opposite side of the lake. The lady of the house saw all from her windows—the horses turned loose to graze, the boats occupied exactly as foretold, the funeral completed, the last sod heaped on the grave, and the party turning to depart without even calling at the house of the nearest connection of the deceased. For the second time she saw it all; but with what feelings, who shall dare to say?

# APPENDIX.

## HOUSEHOLD TALES.

### INTRODUCTORY.

It is only of late years that household tales have been regarded as of interest by men of learning. For long they were thought to be 'milk for babes,' but to have nothing in them which could repay a moment's study by one who had emerged from childhood. But the great Grimm saw that in these stories for children lay fragments of ancient mythology, and he learned to trace them from land to land, and thus to prove them to be precious heirlooms, derived from our primeval ancestors before they parted into separate nationalities. The mine was discovered by Grimm, others have gathered ore from it, but none have thoroughly worked it out, tracing its veins, and exhausting its stores of mythologic wealth.

The following tales are but few; they are the specimens merely, collected by one who has not the time to become a miner, but who delights occasionally in exploring the little-sought-after treasures which lie deep below the surface of society.

A word first on the formation of household tales. Every language has its primary roots, and these roots united together, expanded, somewhat altered with wear-and-tear, become words. The number of radices is fixed. It is small; the words formed from them are innumerable and continually changing.

There was a root in primeval Aryan languages which had the signification of enclosing, it was probably *g* (vowel) *rd*.

From this root we have a garden, a garth, a yard; to gird, a girdle; a ward, either one kept enclosed or an enclosure, of which the keeper is a warden; and a measure of land to be enclosed is a yard. So much for the crop sprung up in England from one root. In Russian, it has produced *gorod*, an enclosed town, and *gorolitj*, to enclose: the German *garten*, *gürtel*, &c.; the French *jardin*, the Latin *hortus*, the Greek χόρτος, the Persian *gird*, a circumference; the Hindustanee *girdâ*, a ring; the Sanskrit *gṛha*, house—all spring from the same root.

In all cognate languages we find the same roots which, however much altered, can be identified and reduced to their primitive form.

Much the same may be said of household tales. In all nations belonging to the same stock there exist stories resembling each other in many particulars, and differing from each other in others; yet with an unmistakable radical unity about them, which makes it easy to reduce them to a primeval root. Who can doubt that *jardin* and *garden* are identical in signification, though they differ somewhat in spelling and in pronunciation? Sometimes in the same nation one radical has developed into several distinct ideas; as garden and warden: so with stories, they may not resemble each other in much that is superficial, yet a critical eye can often perceive their radical identity.

## STORY RADICALS.

### Group I. FAMILY STORIES.

#### Class I. Relate to Husband and Wife.

##### Sect. I.—*Desertion.*

A. The Husband of Supernatural Race.

*Cupid and Psyche root.*

1. A beautiful girl is beloved by a man of supernatural race.

2. He appears as a man by night, and warns her not to look at him.
3. She breaks his command and loses him.
4. She goes in quest of him, and has to surmount difficulties and accomplish tasks.
5. She finally recovers him.

B. The Wife of Supernatural Race.

I. *Melusina root.*

1. A man falls in love with a woman of supernatural race.
2. She consents to live with him if he will not look on her upon a certain day in the week.
3. He breaks her command and loses her.
4. He seeks her, but never recovers her.

II. *Svanhvit root.*

1. A man sees a woman bathing, with her charm-dress on the shore.
2. He steals the dress and she falls into his power.
3. After some years she succeeds in recovering the dress and she escapes.
4. He is unable to recover her.

C. Husband and Wife of Human Race.

I. *Penelope root.*

1. The man goes on his travels, and the wife is left at home.
2. She awaits his return in fidelity.
3. He returns to her.

II. *Genoeva root.*

1. The man goes to war, and the wife remains at home.
2. A false charge is brought against the wife, and he orders her death.
3. She is driven away, but not killed.
4. The husband, on his return, discovers his mistake.
5. He finds her again, and they are reunited.

## Sect. II.—*Deception.*

A. The Man of Mysterious Character.

I. *Heartless Man root.*

1. A giant without a heart marries a woman who has a lover.

2. The lover seeks and finds her, and urges her to kill her husband.
3. She tries to discover where the heart is hidden, and the giant puts her off several times, but at last tells the secret.
4. She destroys the heart, and thus kills her husband, and
5. Elopes with her lover.

II. *Samson root.*

1. The husband has giant strength.
2. The wife, unfaithful to him, seeks of him his secret; he refuses long to reveal it, and at last does so.
3. She betrays the secret to his enemies, and he is ruined.

III. *Hercules root.*

1. The husband has giant strength.
2. A former lover of his wife, who is true to him, determines to cause his death, and persuades the wife to make him a present.
3. She does so without intending harm, and he is killed by it.

## Class II. Relating to Parents and Children.

### Sect. I.—*Children Supernatural.*

A. In consequence of a Vow.

I. *Serpent Child root.*

1. A mother has no child. She says she would like to have one, were it a serpent or a beast.
2. She is brought to bed of a child as she had desired.
3. The child she marries to a man or woman, and by night it assumes human shape.
4. She seizes the skin and burns it. Thenceforth her child loves the serpent or bestial form.

II. *Robert the Devil root.*

1. A mother or father vows a child, if they have one, to an evil being.
2. The child is born, and the evil being claims it.
3. The child escapes, fights with, or tricks, the evil spirit, and—
4. Finally overmasters it and frees himself.

B. Children acquired by some Food eaten.

I. *Goldchild root.*

1. A mother desires a certain food; it makes her pregnant.
2. She casts some of the food away; part is eaten by a mare or a bitch, and part grows; the mare or bitch are also pregnant.
3. The child and the foal, or the whelp and the plant, are twins with strong sympathies.
4. The mother seeks the death of her child, but his twin brother, the foal or the whelp, saves him.
5. They have further adventures.

## Sect. II.—*Children deserted by their Parents.*

A. In consequence of Aversion.

I. *Lear root.*

1. A father has three daughters. He puts their love to the proof, and as the youngest does not profess much love, he drives her away.
2. The father falls into trouble, and the two elder daughters refuse him assistance, but he obtains help from the youngest.

B. By Accident or Misfortune.

I. *Hop o' my Thumb root.*

1. The parents, very poor, desert their children.
2. The youngest child leads the rest home several times, but at last fails to do so.
3. They fall into the power of a supernatural being, but the youngest robs him and they all escape.

II. *Rhea Sylvia root.*

1. The mother, either killed, or leaves the children for a few minutes.
2. They are suckled by a wild beast.
3. They pass through various adventures, and—
4. Are finally recognised and raised to the throne.

## Sect. III.—*Step-parents.*

I. *Juniper Tree root.*

1. A stepmother hates her stepchild, and accomplishes its death.

2. Marvellous circumstances follow, through the transmigration of the soul of the child into—1st, a tree; and 2nd, a bird.
3. Punishment of the stepmother.

II. *Holle root.*

1. A stepmother makes her stepdaughter the slave of the house.
2. Great good-luck falls to the lot of the girl by her amiability.
3. Misfortune befalls the other daughter through her evil temper.

Sect. IV.—*Father falls in love with Daughter.*

*Catskin root.*

1. A Father, having lost his wife, vows to marry one who resembles her.
2. Decides on marrying his daughter.
3. She flies with three smart dresses.
4. She marries a prince in a foreign land.

CLASS III. RELATING TO BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

Sect. I.—*Three Brothers.*

A. *Goldenlock's root.*

1. Three princes set off to obtain a bride. The two first fail.
2. The third succeeds in winning the bride.
3. The two elder waylay him, half kill him, and steal the bride.
4. He recovers and puts his brothers to flight.

B. *White Cat root.*

1. A king sets his sons a task, and promises to the successful son that he shall succeed him.
2. The two eldest are enchanted; the youngest breaks the enchantment, liberates them, and accomplishes the task.

Sect. II.—*Three Sisters.*

A. *Cinderella root.*

1. The youngest of three sisters is employed as kitchen-maid.

2. The eldest sisters go to a ball. By supernatural means the youngest obtains a gorgeous dress, and goes as well.
3. This happens three times. The last time she leaves her slipper.
4. The Prince, by means of the slipper, discovers her and marries her.

B. *Beauty and Beast root.*

1. The youngest of three sisters despised.
2. The father goes a journey and promises them each a present. The youngest asks for a flower only.
3. In obtaining the flower, the father falls into danger, and saves his life by the promise of the surrender of his daughter.
4. The daughter is in great prosperity thereby, and obtains a handsome lover.
5. The sisters injure the lover, and nearly cause his death.
6. The youngest saves his life.

### Sect. III.—*One Brother and Several Sisters.*

1. A brother has several sisters who are married to beasts.
2. The young man has a task to perform.
3. He accomplishes it by the aid of his beast brothers-in-law.

### Sect. IV.—*One Sister and Several Brothers.*

*Seven Swans' root.*

1. A sister has seven brothers who are turned into birds.
2. She seeks their release at the cost of silence.
3. She falls into great peril and is nearly lost, but succeeds in releasing them.
4. She marries a king.

### Sect. V.—*Twin Brothers.*

1. Two brothers love one another dearly. They part on their journeys.
2. Before parting they give each other a token by which they may know the health and prosperity of the other.
3. One brother falls into danger. The other ascertains this—
4. And saves him.

### Sect. VI.—*Two Sisters.*

*See Holle root.*

### Sect. VII.—*One Brother and Sister.*

*Flight from Witchcraft root.*

1. A brother and sister are in the power of a witch or stepmother, or giant.
2. The brother learns witchcraft, or the sister obtains these powers.
3. By means of spittle, or apple pips, they deceive their keeper and escape.
4. They are pursued, and transform themselves repeatedly to elude pursuit.
5. Finally they kill the pursuer.

## Class IV. Relating to Persons Betrothed.

### Sect. I.—*The Bride Exchanged.*

*Bertha root.*

1. A prince sends for a princess whom he will marry. She sets off accompanied by her maidservant.
2. The servant throws the princess out of a ship, and passes herself off as the bride.
3. The princess seeks the king, and the fraud is discovered.

### Sect. II.—*The Bride is Carried off.*

A. *Jason root.*

1. A hero comes into a strange land and falls in love with a princess.
2. The king sets him tasks, and these he performs by aid of the lady.
3. He elopes with her and is pursued.
4. He deserts the bride. *a.* Either through no fault of his own, being rendered oblivious of the past by a kiss from his mother. *b.* Or wilfully.
5. The bride either breaks the enchantment or revenges herself.

B. *Gudrun root.*

1. A bride is carried off by a monster or a hero.
2. And is recovered, or is the cause of misfortune and ruin on the ravisher.

Sect. III.—*A Princess is Cured of Pride by her Suitor.*

A. *Taming of the Shrew root.*

1. She is proud and shrewish.
2. The husband tames her by violence.

B. *Thrush-beard root.*

1. A king, angry with his daughter, for her pride, marries her to a beggar.
2. The beggar makes her into a slave and breaks her spirit.
3. He then discovers himself to be a king, whose suit she had formerly despised.

Sect. IV.—*A Princess Disenchanted.*

*Thornrose root.*

1. A princess warned not to touch a certain article.
2. She does what she is forbidden and falls asleep.
3. A prince discovers her sleeping after the lapse of many years, kisses her and wakes her.

Sect. V.—*Bride obtained by—*

1. Answering a series of riddles.
2. Performing several tasks.
3. Fighting with a monster.
4. Making her laugh.
5. Discovering a secret.

## Group II. VARIOUS.

### Class I. Men and the Unseen World.

Sect. I.—*Journey to Heaven.*

*Jack and Beanstalk root.*

1. A man climbs a tree, or a rope, or a glass mountain, and reaches a land of wonder.
2. He steals from it a harp, money, a golden egg, or a princess.
3. He returns to earth.

*This root is very varied.*

### Sect. II.—*Journey to Hell.*

1. A man descends by an underground passage to a mysterious land.
2. He has several narrow escapes.
3. He rescues from beneath a princess.

*This root is also very varied.*

### Sect. III.—*Men in Conflict with Supernatural Beings.*

A. Men obtain the Mastery by Cunning.

I. *Jack the Giant-killer root.*

1. A man is matched with giants or devils.
2. He deceives them by his superior cunning.
3. He makes them kill themselves.

II. *Polyphemus root.*

1. A man is kept in durance by a giant.
2. He blinds the giant.
3. He escapes by secreting himself under a ram.
4. The giant endeavours to deceive him in turn, but is outwitted.

III. *Magical Conflict root.*

1. Two persons with supernatural powers test them against one another.
2. They pass through various transformations.
3. The good person overcomes the wicked one.

IV. *Devil Outwitted root.*

1. A compact entered into between a man and the devil.
2. The man outwits the devil.

V. *Fearless John root.*

1. A lad knows not fear. He is brought into contact with (1) men, (2) dead bodies, (3) spirits.
2. He has three adventures with spirits in a haunted house, and wrests from them gold.
3. He learns how to shiver, by a pail of goldfish being upset over him in bed.

B. Men are overcome.

I. *Prophecy Fulfilled root.*

1. A prophecy is made by a supernatural being, that a certain child will either kill a king or will marry his daughter.
2. The king seeks the death of the child.
3. The means he used to accomplish this purpose turn to bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy.

II. *Magical Book root.*

1. A man obtains power over evil spirits by certain means.
2. He is unable to control the means, and they ruin him.

## Class II. Men Matched with Men.

### Sect. I.—*A Man obtains Supremacy.*

A. Through his Cunning.

I. *Master Thief root.*

1. A youth goes forth to learn thieving.
2. He steals from a farmer to establish his credit as a thief.
3. Accepted as robber chief, he outwits the band.
4. He returns home and asks the squire's daughter for wife.
5. He is set tasks, which he accomplishes.

II. *Valiant Tailor root.*

1. A tailor kills seven flies at a blow, and believes himself to be a hero.
2. He outwits (1) giants, (2) men.
3. He marries the princess.

B. Through his Skill.

*Tell root.*

1. A tyrant sets an archer the task of shooting an apple or nut from the head of his own son. He accomplishes the task.
2. He is asked the use of the additional arrows in the archer's belt, and is threatened.
3. The archer kills the tyrant after the lapse of years.

Sect. II.—*A Faithful Servant Distrusted.*

I. *Faithful John root.*

1. A prince has a faithful servant, who saves him from danger.
2. The prince mistakes the act and punishes the servant, who is turned into stone.
3. The servant released from enchantment by the tears of the prince and his bride.

II. *Gellert root.*

1. A man has a faithful hound, which saves his child from danger.
2. The man mistakes the act and kills the dog.
3. When too late he discovers his error.

CLASS III. MEN AND BEASTS.

A. Man thankless, Beasts thankful.

I. *Grateful Beasts' root.*

1. A man saves some beasts and a man from a pit.
2. The beasts make their preserver wealthy, but the man tries to work his ruin.

II. *Beast, Bird, Fish root.*

1. A man does a kindness to a beast of the earth, a winged creature of the air, and a denizen of the water.
2. He falls into danger, or has tasks to perform. And these—
3. He accomplishes by aid of the thankful creatures.

B. Man obtains power over Beasts.

1. By his cunning.
2. By his musical powers.

CLASS IV. LUCK DEPENDING ON THE PRESERVATION OF A PALLADIUM.

A. Which is lost by Folly.

I. *Aladdin root.*

1. A man has a treasure of supernatural properties, or a family has a gift given by spirits, which will bring luck.
2. By folly this is lost.
3. It is recovered.

II. *Golden Goose root.*

1. A man has a similar treasure.
2. By folly it is lost.
3. It is never recovered.

I shall now take a story which has an unmistakable mythological origin, and follow it through all its variations in different lands; and the story shall be one of which I have obtained two versions in Yorkshire (No. VII.):—

A boy ran away from home, and went into service; at the end of a year he received as wage an ass which dropped gold; this he lost through the treachery of a publican. He went into service a second year, and obtained in return for his services a table, which at his bidding covered itself with a profusion of dainties; this he lost in a similar manner. A third year's service was rewarded with the gift of a stick, which at his command would knock a man down. By means of this stick the lad recovered his ass and table, and obtained a fortune and a wife.

Now this is a version of a widespread story. Grimm, in his German Household Tales, tells it as follows:—

A tailor had three sons, whom he drove away from home because a goat told stories about them.

The eldest son served a cabinetmaker, and at the end of a year his master gave him a table which, when he bade it, was covered with all he desired; an innkeeper steals it, supplying its place with an imitation. The lad goes home and calls all his relations together to dinner, then orders the table to deck itself, and because it remains unchanged, the relations are indignant, and think that they have been mocked.

The second son served a miller, who gave him a gold-dropping ass; he had but to say 'Bricklebrit!' and the ass discharged a lot of gold pieces. This ass he lost much in the same way as his brother had lost his table, and it came into the possession of the same publican.

The third son served a turner, who gave him a sack with a stick in it, and he had but to say, 'Stick! out of the sack,' and it jumped out and laid about lustily; by means of this stick the boy recovered from the innkeeper his brothers' table and ass.

There are several variations of this story in different parts of Germany. It is told by Bechstein in his Märchenbuch, p. 156; Zingerle picked it up at Meran in the Tyrol (Zingerle, pp. 84 and 185). It has been found in Swabia

(Meier, Schwäbische Märchen, No. 22.); it has been met with in the Netherlands as well. The story is also common to Norway and Denmark (Asbjörnsen, p. 43; Etlar, p. 150). It is told in the first edition of Steer's Hungarian Tales; it is found among the Polish Household Stories of Levestam (p. 105), and among the Wallachian Tales of Schott (p. 20).

The following is a Russian version of the same tale:—

There was once a peasant who had a terrible shrew for his wife, and they were both miserably poor. One day the peasant went to the mill to get some corn ground, and he put the flour into an open vessel which he carried on his head as he returned; the wind was high, and it blew the flour away. When the peasant reached home, his wife beat him and scolded him for having lost the flour, and sent him to the wind to demand payment for the flour it had carried off.

He meets the mother of the winds, who brings him to her cave, and hides him in her oven, having first ascertained from him that the south wind was the thief.

The winds come blustering into the cave, and the old woman demands of the south wind payment for the stolen flour. The guilty zephyr pays the peasant a basket, which becomes full of all good things as soon as the owner says to it, 'Basket, be filled!' Having received this gift, the poor man goes home well satisfied.

The wife, elated at having become possessed of such a treasure, invites a nobleman to supper; and this gentleman, discovering the properties of the basket, makes away with it. The peasant is sent by his wife once more to the winds, and obtains from the south wind a jar, to which he says, 'Five out of the jar, thrash her well!' and then, 'Five into the jar!' The peasant goes home, and is well scolded by his wife for having brought a jar; she takes up a pitchfork to beat him, when he exclaims, 'Five out of the jar, thrash her well!' and five men with flails leap forth, and give the shrew a good dressing. By the same means he recovers from the nobleman his miraculous basket.

From that time forward he lives happily, his wife keeps a civil tongue in her head, and he eats and drinks what he desires. (Dietrich, No. 8.)

The same story is related by Von Hahn in his 'Modern Greek Household Tales;' but this is a variation again, and of a peculiar character, containing matter of mythological interest:—

A man and a woman had no children; the woman prayed that she might be granted one, even though it were a serpent; and in due

course of time she brought forth a serpent, which left the house, and took up its abode in a hole.

The woman is a terrible shrew, and a bad woman to boot; she brings the house to poverty, and then goes to the serpent to ask for relief. The serpent gives his mother a gold-dropping ass, warning her never to let it touch water. The couple live on the gold for some while, but at last the woman leads the ass to water, and it runs away and is lost. She goes once more to her child, who gives her a pitcher, which does all that she wants; she sells this to the king, and is reduced to poverty. The old man now goes to the serpent's lair, and obtains a stick, to which he says, 'Up stick and do your duty!' whereupon it knocks the woman on the head and kills her; so the man lives in happiness ever after.

The same story, but varied again, occurs in the Pentamerone of Basile, a collection of Neapolitan Household Tales, told in the dialect of the people about Naples, made by Giambattista Basile, and published in 1637. It is as follows:

There was once in Maregliano a good woman of the name of Masella, who, besides six unmarried daughters, as tall as hopstakes, had a goose of a son, to whom the snow was too hard for him to venture on making snowballs.

Such a fool was Anthony, that the mother could endure him no longer in the house, so she took a stick to his back, and packed him off with a flea in his ear. He ran, and he ran, till he could run no further, and then he stood panting before a cave, in which he beheld a wild man,—and such a man! He was no taller than a dwarf, but had a huge head, brows which met, squinting eyes, a flat nose, and nostrils like the famous cloacæ of Tarquinius Priscus. 'The blessing of Heaven upon you, sir!' said Anthony, making a profound bow. 'The same to you, and lots of them,' replied the wild man; 'now, my boy, if you want service, enter into mine, and you shall receive good wages.'

So Anthony agreed, and remained servant to the ogre for two years, at the expiration of which time he asked for his wages, that he might be off to his mother.

The wild man made no demur in paying him, but readily gave him a donkey as his hire. 'But mind,' said the ogre in parting with him, 'whatever you do, on no account utter the words, "*Arre cacaurre,*" for, by the soul of my grandfather, it will fare badly with you if you do!'

Anthony mounted the donkey and rode off; but he had not gone far before he desired to know what the effect would be which the mysterious words would produce. So he jumped off Neddy, and pronounced '*Arre cacaurre*' at the top of his voice. At once, long-ear opened her mouth and dropped from it pearls, rubies,

emeralds, sapphires and diamonds, all as big as walnuts. Here was a catch! He pocketed the jewels and rode off to an inn, where he delivered Neddy to the care of the publican, enjoining him on no account to say '*Arre cacaurre.*' Of course the innkeeper discovers the worth of the donkey, and robs the lad of her; so that the boy has to return to the ogre without his wage.

At the end of a year Anthony received from the wild man a napkin, which he had only to spread, and then to say, 'Napkin be covered,' and it would be covered at once with a sumptuous repast. Anthony lost the napkin as he had lost the donkey, and was compelled to return to the ogre for another three years; at the end of which period his master gave him a stick, cautioning him not to say, 'Up with you, stick,' or 'Down with you, stick,' or by the soul of his grandfather it would fare ill with him. By means of this stick, as in the former versions of the story, Anthony recovers the napkin and the donkey, and besides repays his old mother the thrashing she had given him six years before.

That these stories rest upon a common mythological foundation, there is strong evidence to prove. The gold-dropping animal, the magic table or napkin, the self-acting cudgel, appear in some of the tales of ancient India, and their original signification is made apparent.

The Master, who gives the three precious gifts, is the All Father, the Supreme Spirit. The gold and jewel-dropping ass is the spring-cloud hanging in the sky and shedding the bright productive vernal showers. The table which covers itself is the earth becoming covered with flower and fruit at the bidding of the New Year. But there is a check; rain is withheld, the process of vegetation is stayed, by some evil influence. Then comes the thunder-cloud, out of which leaps the bolt; the rains pour down, the earth receives them, and is covered with abundance—all that was lost is restored.

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## 1. THE ROSE-TREE. (*Devonshire.*)

There was once upon a time a good man who had two children: a girl by a first wife, and a boy by the second. The girl was as white as milk, and her lips were like cherries. Her hair was like golden silk, and it hung to the ground. Her brother loved her

dearly, but her wicked stepmother hated her. 'Child,' said the stepmother one day, 'go to the grocer's shop and buy me a pound of candles.' She gave her the money; and the little girl went, bought the candles, and started on her return. There was a stile to cross. She put down the candles whilst she got over the stile. Up came a dog and ran off with the candles.

She went back to the grocer's, and she got a second bunch. She came to the stile, set down the candles, and proceeded to climb over. Up came the dog and ran off with the candles.

She went again to the grocer's, and she got a third bunch; and just the same event happened. Then she came to her stepmother crying, for she had spent all the money and had lost three bunches of candles.

The stepmother was angry, but she pretended not to mind the loss. She said to the child: 'Come, lay thy head on my lap that I may comb thy hair.' So the little one laid her head in the woman's lap, who proceeded to comb the yellow silken hair. And when she combed, the hair fell over her knees, and rolled right down to the ground.

Then the stepmother hated her more for the beauty of her hair; so she said to her, 'I cannot part thy hair on my knee, fetch a billet of wood.' So she fetched it. Then said the stepmother, 'I cannot part thy hair with a comb, fetch me an axe.' So she fetched it.

'Now,' said the wicked woman, 'lay thy head down on the billet whilst I part thy hair.'

Well! she laid down her little golden head without fear; and whist! down came the axe, and it was off. So the mother wiped the axe and laughed.

Then she took the heart and liver of the little girl, and she stewed them and brought them into the house for supper. The husband tasted them and shook his head. He said they tasted very strangely. She gave some to the little boy, but he would not eat. She tried to force him, but he refused, and ran out into the garden, and took up his little sister, and put her in a box, and buried the box under a rose-tree; and every day he went to the tree and wept, till his tears ran down on the box.

One day the rose-tree flowered. It was spring, and there among the flowers was a white bird; and it sang, and sang, and sang like an angel out of heaven. Away it flew, and it went to a cobbler's shop, and perched itself on a tree hard by; and thus it sang:

My wicked mother slew me,
My dear father ate me,
My little brother whom I love
Sits below, and I sing above
Stick, stock, stone dead.*

* I think that these lines are not quite correct, a line seems to be wanting.

'Sing again that beautiful song,' asked the shoemaker. 'If you will first give me those little red shoes you are making.' The cobbler gave the shoes, and the bird sang the song; then flew to a tree in front of a watchmaker's, and sang:

My wicked mother slew me,
My dear father ate me,
My little brother whom I love
Sits below, and I sing above
Stick, stock, stone dead.

'Oh, the beautiful song! sing it again, sweet bird,' asked the watchmaker. 'If you will give me first that gold watch and chain in your hand.' The jeweller gave the watch and chain. The bird took it in one foot, the shoes in the other, and flew away, after having repeated the song, to where three millers were picking a millstone. The bird perched on a tree and sang:

My wicked mother slew me,
My dear father ate me,
My little brother whom I love
Sits below, and I sing above
Stick!

Then one of the men put down his tool and looked up from his work,

Stock!

Then the second miller's man laid aside his tool and looked up,

Stone!

Then the third miller's man laid down his tool and looked up,

Dead!

Then all three cried out with one voice: 'Oh, what a beautiful song! Sing it, sweet bird, again.' 'If you will put the millstone round my neck,' said the bird. The men complied with the bird's request, and away to the tree it flew with the millstone round its neck, the red shoes in the grasp of one foot, and the gold watch and chain in the grasp of the other. It sang the song and then flew home. It rattled the millstone against the eaves of the house, and the stepmother said, 'It thunders.' Then the little boy ran out to see the thunder, and down dropped the red shoes at his feet. It rattled the millstone against the eaves of the house once more, and the stepmother said again, 'It thunders.' Then the father ran out and down fell the chain about his neck.

In ran father and son, laughing and saying, 'See, the thunder has brought us these fine things!' Then the bird rattled the millstone against the eaves of the house a third time; and the stepmother said, 'It thunders again, perhaps the thunder has brought something for me,' and she ran out; but the moment she stepped

outside the door, down fell the millstone on her head; and so she died.

This is the same story as the German tale of 'The Juniper Tree,' but it differs from it in many particulars. In the German story, the boy is killed, not the girl; and he is killed by the shutting down of a lid of a box on his neck as he is looking at some apples. The father is not made to eat of the flesh either; though in the corresponding Greek tale of Asterinos and the Pulja, the bad woman tries to make the sister eat of it. In the Greek story, an apple-tree grows out of the grave, and bears a golden talking apple, not a bird.

The same story is found in Scotland* 'The Milkwhite Doo.' In Languedoc, again, the same is told, the rhyme running thus:

Ma marâtre
Pique pâtre
M'a fait bouillir.
Mon père
Le laboureur
M'a mangé.
Ma jeune sœur
La Lisette
M'a pleuré
Et soupiré,
Sous un arbre
M'a enterré.
tsion! tsion!
Je suis encore en vie!

A similar story, again, is told by the Bechuana, in South Africa.

In the Hungarian tale (Erdélyi Nepmesek, 5) 'A mosoly go alma,' the life of two princes is bound up with golden pear-trees, which a stepmother hews down. From them goes forth a bird which lays two golden eggs, and out of these eggs come forth the princes unhurt.

The millstone occurs in many household tales as thunder.

I have no doubt that there is a mythological root to this curious story.

* Chambers' Popular Rhymes, p. 52.

## 2. THE RIDDLE. (*Devonshire.*)

There was once a lady, very beautiful, and wellborn. For some reason or other she was condemned to die a cruel death.

She pleaded her case, and her beauty and her great goodness touched the judges, till they so far relaxed their severity, as to promise that she should save her neck if she could propose a riddle which they could not answer in three days.

She was given a day to prepare. They came to her in her cell to know the riddle. She said:

Love I sit,
Love I stand;
Love I hold
Fast in hand.
I see Love,
Love sees not me.
Riddle me that,
Or hanged I'll be.'

The judges could not guess, so she was acquitted. Then she gave them the explanation. She had a dog called 'Love.' She had killed it, and with its skin had made socks for her shoes—on these she stood; gloves for her hands—and these she held; a seat for her chair—on that she sat; she looked at her gloves and she saw Love; but Love saw her no more.

The following is the Yorkshire version of the Riddle story:

There was a man sentenced to death, but he pleaded hard to be spared, and the judge consented to set him free if he could propound a riddle which he could not solve. The next day the man offered the following for solution:

Under the earth I go,
Upon oak-leaves I stand;
I ride on a filly that never was foaled,
And carry the mare's skin in my hand.

The explanation was that he had put earth in his cap, oak-leaves in his shoes, cut open a pregnant mare to obtain the foal, and made a whip of the mare's skin.

## 3. JACK HANNAFORD. (*Devonshire.*)

There was an old soldier who had been long in the wars—so long, that he was quite out-at-elbows, and he did not know where to go to find a living. So he walked up moors, down glens, till at last he came to a farm, from which the good man had gone away to market. The wife of the farmer was a very foolish woman; the farmer was foolish enough, too, and it is hard to say which of the two was the most foolish. When you've heard my tale you may decide.

Now before the farmer goes to market says he to his wife, 'Here is ten pounds all in gold, take care of it till I come home.' If the man had not been a fool he would never have given the money to his wife to keep. Well, off he went in his cart to market, and the wife said to herself, 'I will keep the ten pounds quite safe from thieves;' so she tied it up in a rag, and she put the rag up the parlour chimney.

'There', said she, 'no thieves will ever find it now, that is quite sure.'

Jack Hannaford, the old soldier, came and rapped at the door.

'Who is there?' asked the wife.

'Jack Hannaford.'

'Where do you come from?'

'Paradise.'

'Lord a' mercy! and maybe you've seen my old man there,' alluding to her former husband.

'Yes, I have.'

'And how was he adoing?' asked the goody.

'But middling; he cobbles old shoes, and he has nothing but cabbage for victuals.'

'Deary me!' exclaimed the woman. 'Didn't he send a message to me?'

'Yes, he did,' replied Jack Hannaford. 'He said that he was out of leather, and his pockets were empty, so you were to send him a few shillings to buy a fresh stock of leather.'

'He shall have them, bless his poor soul!' And away went the wife to the parlour chimney, and she pulled the rag with the ten pounds in it from the chimney, and she gave the whole sum to the soldier, telling him that her old man was to use as much as he wanted, and to send back the rest.

It was not long that Jack waited after receiving the money; he went off as fast as he could walk.

Presently the farmer came home and asked for his money. The wife told him that she had sent it by a soldier to her former husband in Paradise, to buy him leather for cobbling the shoes of the saints and angels of Heaven. The farmer was very angry, and he swore that he had never met with such a fool as his wife. But

the wife said that her husband was a greater fool for letting her have the money.

There was no time to waste words; so the farmer mounted his horse and rode off after Jack Hannaford. The old soldier heard the horse's hoofs clattering on the road behind him, so he knew it must be the farmer pursuing him. He lay down on the ground, and shading his eyes with one hand, looked up into the sky, and pointed heavenwards with the other hand.

'What are you about there?' asked the farmer, pulling up.

'Lord save you!' exclaimed Jack, 'I've seen a rare sight!'

'What was that?'

'A man going straight up into the sky, as if he were walking on a road.'

'Can you see him still?'

'Yes, I can.'

'Where?'

'Get off your horse and lie down.'

'If you will hold the horse.'

Jack did so readily.

'I cannot see him,' said the farmer.

'Shade your eyes with your hand, and you'll soon see a man flying away from you.'

Sure enough he did so, for Jack leaped on the horse, and rode away with it. The farmer walked home without his horse.

'You are a bigger fool than I am,' said the wife; 'for I did only one foolish thing, and you have done two.'

This is undoubtedly the same story as 'Not a pin to choose between them,' in *Norse Tales*. A similar story is found, with variations, in collections of German household tales. It is told also in Wenzig's *West Slavonic Märchenschatz*, p. 41. It gives a glimpse of the curious semi-pagan ideas of Heaven which reign among the peasantry.

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## 4. SIR FRANCIS DRAKE AND THE DEVILS.

Sir Francis Drake, the great navigator, determined to build a large mansion for himself at Buckland Monachorum. He brought masons and builders from Plymouth, Exeter, and Tavistock; and they worked hard, squaring stones and setting them in mortar; so that the walls rose in one day six feet from the foundation.

Next morning every stone was removed from its place and carried to a great distance.

The great Sir Francis Drake was very angry, but he could not tell who had done the mischief; so he ordered the builders to recommence their work, and they built till they had raised the walls to the same level. Next morning every stone was removed. So then Sir Francis determined to find out who had done this. The builders worked as before, and at night Sir Francis hid himself in a tree and watched.

At midnight the earth opened, and out came a multitude of little devils, chattering and laughing. They set to work at the stones of Buckland Monachorum House, and carried them away with the greatest ease, so that all the walls were demolished before cock-crow.

Next day the workmen builded as before, and raised the walls for the fourth time. In the evening Sir Francis dressed himself all in white, and climbed into a tree. Presently the earth opened, and out came the black little devils, chattering and laughing. Sir Francis let them come with a load of stones under the tree, and then he flapped his arms and cried out very loud, 'Kikkeriki!' And the devils looked up, and saw the great white bird (as they thought him) sitting crowing in the tree; and they dropped all the stones and ran away, screaming with fright, thinking the end of the world would come.

This story seems to be a fragment of an old household tale, which has suffered anthropomorphosis. It was probably told of some fearless Jack long before Sir Francis Drake was born. The little devils are undoubtedly trolls or dwarfs. I am not sure that I have got a correct or a complete version of the story, as it was obtained from a half-witted fellow, who told it me one day near Buckland, whilst I was engaged in opening a tumulus.

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## 5. THE THREE COWS. (*Devonshire.*)

There was a farmer, and he had three cows; fine fat beauties they were. One was called Facey, the other Diamond, and the third Beauty. One morning he went into his cowshed, and there he found Facey so thin that the wind would have blown her away. Her skin hung loose about her, all her flesh was gone, and she stared out of her great eyes as though she'd seen a ghost: and what was more, the fireplace in the kitchen was one great pile of wood-ash. Well, he was bothered with it; he could not see how all this had come about.

Next morning his wife went out to the shed, and see! Diamond was for all the world as wisht a looking creature as Facey—nothing

but a bag of bones, all the flesh gone, and half a rick of wood was gone too; but the fireplace was piled up three feet high with white wood-ashes. The farmer determined to watch the third night; so he hid in a closet which opened out of the parlour, and he left the door just ajar, that he might see what passed.

Tick, tick, went the clock, and the farmer was nearly tired of waiting; he had to bite his little finger to keep himself awake, when suddenly the door of his house flew open, and in rushed maybe a thousand pixies, laughing and dancing and dragging at Beauty's halter till they had brought the cow into the middle of the room. The farmer really thought he should have died with fright, and so perhaps he would had not curiosity kept him alive.

Tick, tick, went the clock, but he did not hear it now. He was too intent staring at the pixies and his last beautiful cow. He saw them throw her down, fall on her, and kill her; then with their knives they ripped her open, and flayed her as clean as a whistle. Then out ran some of the little people and brought in firewood and made a roaring blaze on the hearth, and there they cooked the flesh of the cow—they baked and they boiled, they stewed and they fried.

'Take care,' cried one, who seemed to be the king, 'let no bone be broken.'

Well, when they had all eaten, and had devoured every scrap of beef on the cow, they began playing games with the bones, tossing them one to another. One little leg-bone fell close to the closet-door, and the farmer was so afraid lest the pixies should come there and find him in their search for the bone, that he put out his hand and drew it in to him. Then he saw the king stand on the table and say, 'Gather the bones!'

Round and round flew the imps, picking up the bones. 'Arrange them,' said the king; and they placed them all in their proper positions in the hide of the cow. Then they folded the skin over them, and the king struck the heap of bone and skin with his rod. Whisht! up sprang the cow and lowed dismally. It was alive again; but, alas! as the pixies dragged it back to its stall, it halted in the off forefoot, for a bone was missing.

The cock crew,
Away they flew,

and the farmer crept trembling to bed.

This story is widespread. Vobun relates the following tale, picked up in the Vorarlberg: The night-folk came into a house, took the cow out of the stall, slaughtered it, and, along with the children of the house, ate it whilst the parents were at mass. One of the children broke a leg-bone. The night-folk collected the bones, wrapped them in the skin, saying, 'There is no help for it, the beast must

be lame;' and the cow rose up alive, but halting on one foot.*

Similar stories are told in Switzerland, Canton Bern, Aargau, and in the Tyrol.† The same myth comes to us from Italy.‡

In the 'Legenda Aurea,' the story is told of St. Germanus. The host slaughtered his calf for the saint, who arrived as a traveller; and after the meal the saint collected the bones, wrapped them up in the skin, prayed, and up rose the calf alive. Nennius relates a similar miracle of St. Garmon, so that the myth must be Keltic as well as German. Another Keltic saint, Mochua, performed the same miracle on a stag. Abbot William, at Villiers, performed it on an ox. §

An Irish legend relates as follows: 'Servan was a saint of approved prowess, and great good-nature. Once, when a hospitable poor man killed his only pig to entertain him and his religious companions, he supped upon the pork, and restored the pig to life next morning.' ‖

The same tale is told in Schleswig, with variations. ¶

Now this story originates, among German and Scandinavian peoples, from the Eddaic legend of Thor. One day the god Thor set out in his car, drawn by two he-goats. Spending the night at a peasant's cottage, Thor killed the goats, and having flayed them, boiled and ate the flesh. One of the peasant's children took a leg-bone, and broke it to get at the marrow. On the morrow Thor collected all the bones, placed them in the skins, consecrated them with his mallet, and up rose the goats alive, but one of them was lame.**

That a similar myth prevailed anciently in India, is probable from the following passages in the Rigveda. Ribhus having restored a sacrificed ox to life, this hymn is sung:

* Volun, *Sagen aus Vorarlberg*, p. 27.

† *Canton Bern*, p. 243; Rochholz, *Schweizersagen*, p. 316; *Drei Sommer in Tyrol*, p. 82; Bridel, *Conservateur Suisse*, 1825, No. 43.

‡ Wolf, *Beiträge*, 1. 89.

§ Thomas Cantipratensis, *Bonum Universale.*

‖ Bolland, i. 815, Jan. 13.

¶ Mullenhoff, *Sagen*, 314.

** Snorro, *Edda*, 44.

'O sons of Sudharvân, out of the hide have you made the cow to arise; by your songs the old have you made young, and from one horse have you made another horse.'

'Ribhus, with the hide have ye clothed about the cow, and bound up again the mother with the calf; the aged fathers have ye restored to youth, O sons of Sudharvân.'

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## 6. THE FISH AND THE RING. (*Yorkshire.*)

There lived in York three hundred years ago a very poor man, who had a little shop under the shadow of the Minster towers. He had already three daughters and two sons when his wife gave him hopes of a sixth child. Nor were these expectations blighted, for in due course of time she presented him with a little girl. The poor man groaned at the sight, took the child, and laid it on the counter before him, shedding tears at the prospect of having another mouth to fill. A knight who was riding by heard his sobs, and inquiring the cause, learned that the new babe was *un petit peu de trop* in the house. Now, being a sorcerer, the knight opened his great Book of Fate, and as he read therein his hair bristled on his head, and his cheek grew pale, for he saw it plainly written that this nursling babe was to be his son's wife. Determined to avoid this catastrophe, he offered to adopt the child and endow it with all his wealth. The delighted father agreed, and gave the babe into the arms of the knight, who carried it to the banks of the Ouse and flung it in. But the little creature did not sink. Its dress buoyed it up, and it was washed ashore near a fisherman's cottage. This good man, finding the poor wailing child on the river-bank, brought it home, and with his wife's consent adopted it, and under their roof it grew up to be a handsome girl of fifteen.

One day the knight came riding along the river with a number of friends. They called at the fisherman's cottage, and asked for some fish. The girl came to the door, and all the riders were struck by her beauty. As they continued their ride, they praised her much for her courteousness and the loveliness of her face, till the knight jestingly said he would search the Book of Fate to see who should be her husband. He did so, and found, to his terror, that this girl was the same whom he had flung over the bridge and believed to be dead long ago. So, leaving his comrades, he rode back to the cottage and asked the fisherman to allow his daughter to take a letter for him to his brother, a noble knight, at Scarborough. Then he wrote a letter to this effect:—

'DEAR BROTHER,—Take the bearer and put her to death immediately.—Yours affectionately.'

Sealing this, he gave it to the girl, and she started on her journey. On the way she slept a night in a little inn. Now it fell out that a thief broke into the inn that night and entered the maiden's room, where he found the letter, and opening it he read it. Then turning his dark lanthorn on the face of the sleeping girl, he thought, 'How sad that this beautiful damsel should be the bearer of her own sentence of death! Surely she deserves a better fate.' Then, taking a pen, he wrote on paper a note, as though from the knight, telling the brother to marry the girl to his son. Having done this, he sealed the letter and placed it in the girl's purse, whence he had abstracted the real letter. She, waking the next morning, and knowing nothing of what had taken place during the night, hastened to Scarborough, where she was well received by the knight's brother. He read the letter, and gave immediate orders for the celebration of her nuptials with the knight's son, who was then staying at his castle.

Some days after, the knight arrived at his brother's mansion, and was much astonished and perplexed to see the course which affairs had taken, and to find that all his attempts to frustrate the purposes of fate had been in vain. However, he was not a bit more disposed than before to take matters quietly, so dragging the poor girl to the shore by her hair, he drew his dagger to stab her. She fell on her knees and implored him to spare her life, on which he so far relented that he plucked a golden ring from his finger and cast it as far as he could into the tumbling waves, saying to her, 'Swear to me that you will not come within my sight till that ring is on your finger, and I will spare your life.' She took the requisite oath and fled the place.

Far and wide did she wander, begging from door to door, till at last she found a situation as cook in a nobleman's house. One day, when guests were arriving, she looked from the window and saw the knight, her cruel father-in-law, and his son, her husband. Trembling, she hid herself in the kitchen, and her tears were mingled with the food she dressed. Just before dinner a fisherman came to the door with a magnificent fish for sale. She took it in and began to clean it. Scarcely had she opened it when she saw something glittering in its stomach. She examined the shining substance—and, lo! it was the knight's ring! Her heart was now full of joy, and her tears were lost in smiles. She cooked the dinner so well that the knight, her father-in-law, asked his host who was his cook.

'A strange girl,' replied he, 'who came begging to my door, and whom I received into my house from charity. Ho! some of you servants, bid her come up into the dining-hall.'

The girl, receiving this command, washed her face, braided her hair, and put on her best array; then, with the ring on her finger, she entered the hall where all were feasting.

The revellers turned to look at her, for she seemed as fair as the moon, as lovely as a rose. With an exclamation of rage and dismay, the knight rose to his feet. He recognised her at once, and, drawing his sword, rushed forward to cut her down; but she held up her hand with a smile, and there he saw the ring he had cast into the sea. Now, at length he acknowledged that he was powerless to resist fate, and suffered her to remain in peace with his son, who loved her dearly, and she became famous through the land for her beauty, her courtesy, and her goodness.

This story is made up of two story-radicals:

A. The first as far as to the marriage;

B. The second from the marriage to the end.

The first part of the story closely resembles 'The Devil with the Three Golden Hairs,' in Grimm's Kinder-Mährchen, No. 29; to which are also related a Swiss story of Vogel Greet (K. M. No. 165), a Swedish tale (Afzelius 2, 161–167), a Norwegian (Asbjörnsen, No. 5), a Wendish tale (Haupt u. Schmaler, No. 17), a Hungarian (Mailan, No. 8), and a Mongolian tale in Gesser Khan, p. 142. In the German story a king takes the place of the knight, and the babe is a boy born with a caul, and therefore fated to marry his daughter. He takes the boy and casts him into the water, and it is saved by a miller. The incident of the change of letters by the thief is the same. After this the German tale branches off in another direction altogether. A modern Greek household tale (Von Hahn, No. 20) is to this effect: It is prophesied that a babe will cause the death of a merchant; the merchant takes the child, as in the Yorkshire and German story, and casts it into the river, when it is saved by a shepherd. Then follows the recognition of the boy, when grown up, by the merchant, and the incident of the letter; after which the story goes off on another track. The same story exists in the 'Gesta Romanorum.' * It is impossible not to recognise in the myth of Romulus and Remus an Italic form of the same widespread household tale localised.

The second part of the same Yorkshire story is founded on a different root, and one which reappears in numerous tales. For instance, in 'Herodotus,' it is told of Polycrates;

* Ed. Swan, vol. i. Tale 20.

in the old Provençal romance of 'Magelone' it more closely resembles the form in the Yorkshire tale. If I remember aright, it occurs in one of the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments;' and if so, it was a relic of Persian romance, and would, in all probability, be found in India as well. I am not sure that it has not a mythical signification, and that the ring apparently lost in the sea, and recovered from it again, does not portray the sun cast, as it were, by the power of darkness into the deep, and recovered again by the virgin Aurora or the dawn. The instances of the reappearance of this root in household tales are too numerous to be specified. I may mention that it occurs in the familiar French tale of 'The Fair One with Golden Locks,' and that we find it in all the kindred tales of the Aryan family.

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## 7. THE ASS, THE TABLE, AND THE STICK.

(*Yorkshire, West Riding.*)

A lad was once so unhappy at home through his father's ill-treatment, that he made up his mind to run away and seek his fortune in the wide world.

He ran, and he ran, till he could run no longer, and then he ran right up against a little old woman who was gathering sticks. He was too much out of breath to beg pardon, but the woman was good-natured, and she said he seemed to be a likely lad, so she would take him to be her servant, and would pay him well. He agreed, for he was very hungry, and she brought him to her house in the wood, where he served her for a year and a day. When the twelvemonth had passed, she called him to her, and said she had good wages for him. So she presented him with an ass out of the stable, and he had but to pull Neddy's ears to make him begin at once to ee—aw! And when he brayed there dropped from his mouth silver sixpences, halfcrowns, and golden guineas.

The lad was well pleased with the wage he had received, and away he rode till he reached an inn. There he ordered the best of everything, and when the innkeeper refused to provide them without some assurance of being paid, the boy hied him to the stable, pulled the ass's ears, and obtained his pocket full of money. The host had watched the proceedings through a crack in the door, and when night came on he substituted an ass of his own for the precious Neddy of the poor youth, who, unconscious of any change having been made, rode away next morning to his father's house.

Now I must tell you that near the paternal cottage dwelt a poor widow with an only daughter. The lad and the maiden were fast friends and trueloves; but when Jack asked his father's leave to marry the girl, 'Never, till you have the money to keep her,' was the reply. 'I have that, father,' said the lad, and going to the ass he pulled its long ears. Well, he pulled and he pulled, till one of them came off in his hands; but Neddy, though he brayed lustily, let fall no halfcrowns or guineas. The father picked up a hayfork and beat his son out of the house. I promise you he ran. Ah! he ran and ran till he came bang against the door; and burst it open, and there he was in a joiner's shop. 'You're a likely lad,' said the joiner; 'serve me for a twelvemonth, and I will pay you well.' So he agreed and served the carpenter for a year and a day. 'Now,' said the master, 'I will give you your wage;' and he presented him with a table, telling him he had but to say, 'Table, be covered,' and at once it would be spread with an abundant feast.

Jack hitched the table on his back, and away he went with it till he came to the inn. 'Well, host,' shouted he, 'my dinner to-day, and that of the best.'

'Very sorry, but there is nothing in the house but ham and eggs.'

'Ham and eggs for me!' exclaimed Jack. 'I can do better than that.—Come, my table, be covered!'

At once the table was spread with turkey and sausages, roast mutton, potatoes, and greens. The publican opened his eyes, but said nothing.

That night he fetched down from his attic a table very similar to that of Jack, and exchanged the two. Jack, none the wiser, next morning hitched the worthless table on his back and carried it home. 'Now, father, may I marry my lass?' he asked.

'Not unless you can keep her,' replied the father.

'Look here!' exclaimed Jack. 'Father, I have a table which does all my bidding.'

'Let me see it,' said the old man.

The lad set it in the middle of the room, and bade it be covered; but all in vain, the table remained bare. In a rage, the father caught the warming-pan down from the wall and *warmed* his son's back pretty effectually with it, so that the boy fled howling from the house, and ran and ran till he came to a river and tumbled in. A man picked him out and bade him assist him in making a bridge over the river; and how do you think he was effecting this? Why, by casting a tree across; so Jack climbed up to the top of the tree and threw his weight on it, so that when the man had rooted the tree up, Jack and the tree-head dropped on the farther bank.

'Thank you,' said the man, 'and now for what you have done I will pay you;' so saying, he tore a branch from the tree, and fettled

it up into a club with his knife. 'There,' exclaimed he: 'take this stick, and when you say to it, "Up stick and fell him," it will knock anyone down who angers you.'

The lad was overjoyed to get this stick—so away he went with it to the inn, and as soon as the publican appeared, 'Up stick and fell him!' was his cry. At the word the cudgel flew from his hand and battered the old publican on the back, rapped his head, bruised his arms, tickled his ribs, till he fell groaning on the floor; still the stick belaboured the prostrate man, nor would Jack call it off till he had recovered the stolen ass and table. Then he galloped home on the ass, with the table on his shoulders, and the stick in his hand. When he arrived there his father was dead, so he brought his ass into the stable, and pulled its ears till he had filled the manger with money.

It was soon known through the town that Jack had returned rolling in wealth, and accordingly all the girls in the place set their caps at him. 'Now,' said Jack, 'I shall marry the richest lass in the place; so to-morrow do you all come in front of my house with your money in your aprons.'

Next morning the street was full of girls with aprons held out, and gold and silver in them; but Jack's own sweetheart was among them, and she had neither gold nor silver, naught but two copper pennies, that was all she had.

'Stand aside, lass,' said Jack to her, speaking roughly. 'Thou hast no silver nor gold—stand off from the rest.' She obeyed, and the tears ran down her cheeks, and filled her apron with diamonds.

'Up stick and fell them,' exclaimed Jack; whereupon the cudgel leaped up, and running along the line of expectant damsels, knocked them all on the heads and left them senseless on the pavement. Jack took all their money and poured it into his truelove's lap. 'Now, lass,' he exclaimed, 'thou art the richest, and I shall marry thee.'

Another version obtained in the East Riding:

There was once a poor woodcutter who had three sons. They lived in a great forest and worked hard all day making fagots. The eldest of the three one day declared he was tired of his work, and should go and seek his fortune. He flung down his axe and started at once; he walked on and on till he was tired, and then sat down on a hillside to rest. Just as he was falling asleep, a little man, not so high as his knee, stood before him, and asked where he was going. 'To seek my fortune, said the lad. 'Well', said the little man, 'go on over yon hills, and you will come to a white house. Say Harry-cap has sent you, and you will be admitted.' The boy got up and travelled on till he came to the white house. He said what the little man had bade him, and was at once told to enter. He slept well, and on the morrow, when about to come away, the people of the house brought him as a present a purse, which had,

and always would have, one piece of money in it—no matter what piece was required, it was always there—never more than needed, never less. Delighted with his acquisition, the boy instantly set off homewards. He saw no more of Harry-cap, but thanks to the purse he lacked nothing on the road.

One evening when drawing homewards he stayed at an inn. The landlord's daughter, who brought him refreshments, noticed his purse, and being a witch knew its powers and value. She instructed her mother to make one exactly like it, and in the dead of night, while the lad was fast asleep, she stole into his room, and exchanged the purses.

The counterfeit purse had one piece in it, just what she took care to charge him for breakfast, so that the defrauded lad did not discover his loss. On his arrival at home, he told the household the good news, and they called in the neighbours to hear it too. The neighbours did not know how to praise him enough, and at last, in a fit of generosity, he said he would give a piece of money to each. This, of course, he was unable to do. Finding out the miserable cheat, the neighbours loaded him with abuse, and, had not his own folk stood up for him, would have maltreated him in other ways. For what is so despicable as an empty purse?

The poor lad had to take to the woods again, but his example stirred up the second son to seek his fortune also. He set out, met Harry-cap in the same place, was directed to the same white house, and received as a parting gift from its inhabitants a round table, which at his bidding would immediately be covered with all manner of dainty food. Overjoyed with his treasure, he set off homewards, but staying at the same inn where his brother had tarried, he was in a similar way cheated by the witch-daughter.

The neighbours were called in as before, and when disappointed of a promised feast, they cudgelled the poor lad unmercifully.

Now the third son was a silent, thinking lad. He mused over the stories of his two brothers, and resolved to profit by their experience; he set off, met Harry-cap, went to the white house, and when coming away received a stick which, when bidden by its owner, would thrash his enemies, and which was also a great help to him when journeying. Bearing in mind how his brothers had stopped at the same inn on the way home, and had missed their treasures soon afterwards, he resolved to be on the look-out.

In the dead of the night he spied the witch-daughter creep into the room, and lay her hand on the stick. 'Stick, bang her!' he cried, and the cudgel (as if possessed by the whole Irish nation) began immediately to thrash the witch all round the room. In vain she begged for mercy till she offered him a purse always containing one piece of money, and a table that would always supply a dinner on demand. He took the treasures and set off homewards cheerily enough, stick in hand, purse in pocket, table over shoulder; and so he entered the house. Summoning the neighbours as

before, they were sumptuously regaled, and after dinner he presented each with the piece of money promised them before. Then he said to them: 'When my brothers returned and could not entertain you as they anticipated, you took no heed of their goodwill in offering you a share of their good fortune, but abused them instead of sharing their sorrow,' and, turning to the stick, he exclaimed 'Bang 'em!' So out of the house it drove them, through the streets, and over the bridge, till the bridge bended, and my tale's ended.

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## 8. THE PARROT. (*Yorkshire.*)

There was once a grocer who had a beautiful parrot with green feathers, and it hung in a cage at his shop-door; it was a very shrewd sensible bird, and very observing; but it was a female, and as such could not hold its tongue, but proclaimed aloud all that it knew, announcing to everyone who entered the shop the little circumstances which had fallen under its observation.

One day the parrot observed its master sanding the sugar; presently in came a woman and asked for some brown sugar. 'Sand in the sugar!—Sand in the sugar!—Sand in the sugar!' vociferated the bird, and the customer pocketed her money and rushed out of the shop.

The indignant grocer rushed to the cage and shook it well. 'You abominable bird, if you tell tales again, I will wring your neck!' and again he shook the cage till the poor creature was all ruffled, and a cloud of its feathers was flying about the shop.

Next day it saw its master mixing cocoa-powder with brick-dust; presently in came a customer for cocoa-powder. 'Brick-dust in the cocoa!' cried the parrot, eagerly and repeatedly, till the astonished customer believed it, and went away without his cocoa. A repetition of the shaking of the cage ensued, with a warning that such another instance of tale-telling should certainly be punished with death. The parrot made internal resolutions never to speak again.

Presently, however, it observed its master making shop-butter of lard coloured with a little turmeric. In came a lady and asked for butter.

'Nice fresh butter, ma'am, fresh from the dairy,' said the shopman.

'Lard in the butter—lard in the butter!' said the parrot.

'You scoundrel, you!' exclaimed the shopman, rushing at the cage; opening it, drawing forth the luckless bird, and wringing its neck, he cast it into the ashpit. But Polly was not quite dead, and after lying quiet for a few minutes, she lifted up her head and saw a dead cat in the pit.

'Halloo!' called the parrot, 'what is the matter with you, Tom?'

No answer, for the vital spark of heavenly flame had quitted the mortal frame of the poor cat. 'Dead!' sighed the parrot. 'Poor Tom! he too must have been afflicted with the love of truth. Ah me!' She sat up and tried her wings. 'They are sound. Great is truth in my own country, but in this dingy England it is at a discount, and lies are at a premium.' Then spreading her wings, Polly flew away; but whether she ever reached her own land, where truth was regarded with veneration, I have not heard. No; she flew twice round the world in search of it, and could not find it. I wonder whether she has found it now!

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## 9. THE HAND OF GLORY. (*Yorkshire.*)

One dark night, after the house had been closed, there came a tap at the door of a lone inn, in the midst of a barren moor.

The door was opened, and there stood without, shivering and shaking, a poor beggar, his rags soaked with rain and his hands white with cold. He asked piteously for a lodging, and it was cheerfully granted him; though there was not a spare bed in the house, he could lie along on the mat before the kitchen-fire, and welcome.

All in the house went to bed except the cook, who from her kitchen could see into the large room through a small pane of glass let into the door. When every one save the beggar was out of the room, she observed the man draw himself up from the floor, seat himself at the table, extract a brown withered human hand from his pocket, and set it upright in the candlestick. He then anointed the fingers, and applying a match to them, they began to flame. Filled with horror, the cook rushed up the backstairs, and endeavoured to arouse her master and the men of the house; but all in vain—they slept a charmed sleep; and finding all her efforts ineffectual, she hastened downstairs again. Looking again through the small window, she observed the fingers of the hand flaming, but the thumb gave no light—this was because one of the inmates of the house was not asleep.

The beggar began collecting all the valuables of the house into a large sack, and having taken all that was worth taking in the large room, he entered another. The moment he was gone, the cook rushed in, and seizing the candle, attempted to extinguish the flames. She blew at them in vain; she poured some drops from a beer-jug over them, and that made the fingers burn the brighter; she cast some water upon them, but still without putting out the light; as a last resource, she caught up

a jug of milk, and dashing it over the four lambent flames, they were extinguished immediately.

Uttering a loud cry, she rushed to the door of the apartment the beggar had entered, and locked it. The whole house was aroused, and the thief secured and hung.

This is the same story which is told in Northumberland and elsewhere.

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## 10. THE GOLDEN BALL. (*Yorkshire.*)

There were two lasses, daughters of one mother, and as they came home from t' fair, they saw a right bonny young man stand it house-door before them. They niver seed such a bonny man afore. He had gold on t' cap, gold on t' finger, gold on t' neck, a red gold watch-chain—eh! but he had brass. He had a golden ball in each hand. He gave a ball to each lass, and she was to keep it, and if she lost it, she was to be hanged. One o' the lasses, 't was t' youngest, lost her ball. [I'll tell thee how. She was by a park-paling, and she was tossing her ball; and it went up, and up, and up, till it went fair over t' paling; and when she climbed up to look, t' ball ran along green grass, and it went raite forward to t' door of t' house, and t' ball went in and she saw 't no more.]

So she was taken away to be hanged by t' neck till she were dead, a cause she'd lost her ball.

[But she had a sweetheart, and he said he would get ball. So he went tu't park-gate, but 't was shut; so he climbed hedge, and when he got tut top of hedge, an old woman rose up out of t' dyke afore him, and said, if he would get ball, he must sleep three nights in t' house. He said he would.

Then he went into t' house, and looked for ball, but could na find it. Night came on and he heard spirits move it courtyard; so he looked out o' t' window, and t' yard was full of them, like maggots in rotten meat.

Presently he heard steps coming upstairs. He hid behind door, and was as still as a mouse. Then in came a big giant five times as tall as he were, and giant looked round but did not see t' lad, so he went tut window and bowed to look out; and as he bowed on his elbows to see spirits it yard, t' lad stepped behind him, and wi' one blow of his sword he cut him in twain, so that the top part of him fell in the yard, and t' bottom part stood looking out of t' window.

There was a great cry from t' spirits when they saw half the giant come tumbling down to them, and they called out, 'There comes half our master, give us t' other half.'

So the lad said, 'It's no use of thee, thou pair of legs, standing aloan at window, as thou hast no een to see with, so go join thy brother;' and he cast the bottom part of t' giant after top part. Now when the spirrits had gotten all t' giant they were quiet.

Next night t' lad was at the house again, and now a second giant came in at door, and as he came in t' lad cut him in twain, but the legs walked on tut chimney and went up them. 'Go, get thee after thy legs,' said t' lad tut head, and he cast t' head up chimney too.

The third night t' lad got into bed, and he heard spirits striving under the bed, and they had t' ball there, and they was casting it to and fro.

Now one of them has his leg thrussen out from under bed, so t' lad brings his sword down and cuts it off. Then another thrusts his arm out at other side of the bed, and t' lad cuts that off. So at last he had maimed them all, and they all went crying and wailing off, and forgot t' ball, but he took it from under t' bed, and went to seek his truelove.]

Now t' lass was taken to York to be hanged; she was brought out on t' scaffold, and t' hangman said, 'Now, lass, tha' must hang by t' neck till tha be'st dead.' But she cried out:

Stop, stop, I think I see my mother coming!
Oh mother, hast brought my golden ball
And come to set me free?

I've neither brought thy golden ball
Nor come to set thee free,
But I have come to see thee hung
Upon this gallows-tree.

Then the hangman said, 'Now, lass, say thy prayers, for tha must dee.' But she said:

Stop, stop, I think I see my father coming!
O father, hast brought my golden ball
And come to set me free?

I've neither brought thy golden ball
Nor come to set thee free,
But I have come to see thee hung
Upon this gallows-tree.

Then the hangman said, 'Hast thee done thy prayers? Now, lass, put thy head intut noo-is.'

But she answered, 'Stop, stop, I think I see my brother coming!' &c. After which, she excused herself because she thought she saw her sister coming, then her uncle, then her aunt, then her cousin, each of which was related in full; after which the hangman said, 'I wee-nt stop no longer, tha's making gam of me. Tha must be hung at once.'

But now she saw her sweetheart coming through the crowd, and he had over head i' t' air her own golden ball; so she said:

Stop, stop, I see my sweetheart coming!
Sweetheart, hast brought my golden ball
And come to set me free?

Aye, I have brought thy golden ball
And come to set thee free;
I have not come to see thee hung
Upon this gallows-tree.

The portions of this curious tale which are enclosed within brackets were obtained from a different informant. It seems to be a Yorkshire version of Grimm's 'Fearless John' (Kinder-Mährchen, 4). In both these is the giant cut in half, and the incident of the chimney, and also the wonderful bed.

In one of Grimm's versions of the tale, the lad is able to overcome the spirits by means of a stick which he obtained from a dead man on the gallows, the man having been hung for a theft which he had not committed. The boy brings him to Christian burial, and in reward obtains the stick. In the Yorkshire story, the lad saves a girl from the gallows by means of a golden ball he had recovered from the spirits. There is a family likeness in the tales.

The other portion of the story resembles the popular Essex game of 'Mary Brown,' which is thus played:

The children form a ring, one girl kneeling in the centre; those in the ring sing out:

Here we all stand round the ring,
And now we shut poor Mary in.
Rise up, rise up, poor Mary Brown
And see your poor mother go through the town.

To this she answers:

I will not rise upon my feet
To see my poor mother go through the street.

The children bid her rise to see her poor father, then her brother, her sister, the poor beggars go through the street, and lastly, her poor sweetheart, whereupon she rises to her feet.

The Swedish 'Fair Gundela' also resembles it.

THE RING.

Why row ye so? Why row ye so?
Fair Gundela

GUNDELA.

Sure I may row, sure I may row,
Whilst the grass groweth
All summer through.

THE RING.

Now I have heard that your father is dead,
Fair Gundela!

GUNDELA.

What matters my father? My mother lives still.
Thank Heaven for that!

She is then informed that her mother, brother, sister, &c., are all dead, and she invariably has some consolation to offer to herself; but when she is told that her truelove is dead she is inconsolable.

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## 11. THE PROPHECY. (*Yorkshire.*)

There was once a rich man, and he had brass; that he had. One day he was riding out of t' town, and he saw an old witch, and her child had fallen intut mire, and she axed rich man to hug him out, but he wouldn't do nowt o't sort. Eh! she were angry.

She said to him, 'Tha must have a son, and he shall dee afore he be turned twenty-one.'

Well, he had a son, and he was flayed lest what she said should come true.

So he built a tower all round, and there was no door, no but a window high up. And he put bairn in there. And he put an old man it tower to fend for bairn, and he sent him food and clothes and all he wanted by a rope up intut chamber. Well, when t' lad was one and twenty, ont' very day, it was cold, and t' lad was right starved, so he said tut old man that he'd fain have a fire, and they let down rope and they pulled up a bundle of wood. T' lad hugged bundle, and cast it in t' fire, and as he cast it a snake came out from t' bundle in which it had been hidden, and it bit t' lad, and he died.

She wor a bad un wor that witch!

## 12. LYING TALE. (*Yorkshire.*)

There was once five men: the one had no eyes, the second had no legs, the third was dumb, the fourth had no arms, the fifth was neck't.

The blind man exclaimed, 'Eh, lads, I see a bird!'
The dumb man said, 'I'll shoot it!'
The man without legs said, 'I'll run after it!'
The man without arms said, 'I'll pick it up!'
And the neck't man said, 'I'll put it in my pocket!'
*Chorus of Yorkshire children*: 'Eh! That is a lee!'

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## 13. THE RAVEN. (*Cornwall.*)

A quarryman was working under a large block of stone, which was ready to fall. Of this he was not aware; but a raven saw his peril and determined to save the man. So the bird picked up a pebble and dropped it on the miner's head.

'Get along, thou foul bird,' cried the man, and continued working.

The raven picked up another stone, and dropped it on the man's head. The fellow swore and went on with his work.

Then the bird flew to the shore and picked up a bit of wood from a wreck, and this he let fall at the man's feet.

'Halloo!' exclaimed he, 'Where that comes from there is more to be got!' and flinging down pick and shovel, he ran to the beach. Down crashed the rock, but the man was safe, rescued by the kindly raven.

Now, this story is told in 'Taylor's Remarkable Providences' as a fact, in these words:—

### EXTRAORDINARY INTERPOSITION OF PROVIDENCE.

The following account was contained in a letter from Newcastle, dated January 18, 1766: 'Not long ago, a countryman, making up a hedge near an old stone quarry in the neighbourhood of Sunderland, went to eat his dinner (which he had with him) in a deep cavity or hollow place, to be sheltered from the weather; and as he went along pulled off his hedging gloves or mittens, and threw them down at some distance from one another. While at his

repast, he observed a raven take up one of them, with which it flew away; and very soon afterwards the raven returned, lighted upon the ground, took up the other mitten, and went off with that as before. Being surprised, he arose to see if he could find out the reason of so odd an accident, and to observe what had become of his mittens. He had hardly got clear of the quarry before he saw a large quantity of ground, full of loose pieces of rock, tumble down into the very place where he had been seated, and where, if he had continued a minute longer, he must inevitably have been crushed to pieces.'

Here we have the tale christianised, and toned down to serve a pious purpose. The raven, instead of being, as the Cornish tale seems to suggest, a guardian spirit, is here acting under the direction of Providence; and the characteristic allusion to the wrecking propensities of the Cornishman is swept away in the Northumbrian tale.

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## 14. THE GOLDEN ARM.

'There was once a man who travelled the land all over in search of a wife. He saw young and old, rich and poor, pretty and plain, and could not meet with one to his mind. At last he found a woman young, fair and rich, who possessed the supreme. the crowning glory, of having a right arm of solid gold. He married her at once, and thought no man so fortunate as he was. They lived happily together, but, though he wished people to think otherwise, he was fonder of the golden arm than of all his wife's gifts besides.

At last she died. The husband appeared inconsolable. He put on the blackest black, and pulled the longest face at the funeral; but for all that he got up in the middle of the night, dug up the body, and cut off the golden arm. He hurried home to secrete his recovered treasure, and thought no one would know.

The following night he put the golden arm under his pillow, and was just falling asleep, when the ghost of his dead wife glided into the room. Stalking up to the bedside it drew the curtain, and looked at him reproachfully. Pretending not to be afraid, he spoke to the ghost, and said, 'What hast thou done with thy cheeks so red?' 'All withered and wasted away,' replied the ghost, in a hollow tone.

'What hast thou done with thy red rosy lips?'—'All withered and wasted away.'

'What hast thou done with thy golden hair?' —'All withered and wasted away.'

'What hast thou done with thy *Golden Arm?*' —'Thou hast it!'

N.B.—The dialogue progresses in horror, till at the close, the ghost's exclamation is shrieked out at the top of the narrator's voice, the candle extinguished, and the young auditors duly panic-stricken. No one desires to know what became of the avaricious husband.

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## 15. THE FAITHFUL DAUGHTER.

There was a wealthy gentleman
  Who did most wickedly
With many more conspire against
  The king's high majesty;
For which he was in prison cast,
  And bound with iron strong,
And there he was condemn'd to fast
  Until his life were gone.

This cruel sentence was pronounc'd,
  That till his dying day
He should not have one bit of food
  His hunger to allay.
And that if any one should dare
  To assist him night or day,
A solemn oath the monarch sware,
  To take their lives away.

Within this dismal horrid place,
  And chained to the wall,
Fast down his aged wrinkled face,
  The scalding tears did fall.
Most grievously he languished
  And bitterly did cry,
'For want of bread, one bit of bread,
  I famish, starve, and die!

'O that I had one crust to eat,
  My hunger to control!
How precious is one grain of wheat
  Unto a hungry soul!

Had I this dungeon heap'd with gold,
I freely would it give,
All for a little loaf of bread,
That I might eat and live.

'Though it were mouldy, black, or brown,
Or trodden in the mire,
It would be pleasing to my taste,
And sweet to my desire.
One drop of water let me have,
To cool my parched tongue;
Or were I laid within the grave,
My sufferings would be done!'

He many friends and daughters had,
The richest in the town,
Yet none durst come to succour him,
Dreading the monarch's frown.
All but the youngest, and to her
He had behaved unkind,
Because that she had married
Contrary to his mind.

The youngest to her sisters went,
All ladies, high and great,
And there did bitterly lament
Their father's cruel fate.
'O sisters dear, contrive some way,
His life still to preserve;
He in a dungeon pines away,
Condemned there to starve.'

'Alas!' his wealthy daughters said,
'We can do him no good,
You know 'tis death to any one
Who dares to take him food.
The king's displeasure is so great,
That we should ruin'd be;
Therefore we think it is as good
That he should die as we.'

His youngest daughter's heart did ache,
Most bitter did she cry,
'Shall we our father dear forsake
In his extremity!
Although he spurn'd me from his door,
Because a poor man's wife,
Yet would I freely shed my blood
To save my father's life.'

Unto the palace then she hies,
And falling on her knee,
With wringing hands and bitter cries,
These words pronounced she :—
'My helpless father, sovereign liege,
Offending of your grace,
Is judg'd unto a pining death,*
Within a dismal place.

'Which I confess he has deserved—
Yet, mighty prince,' said she,
'Vouchsafe in gracious sort to grant
One simple boon to me.
It chanced so I match'd myself
Against my father's mind,
Whereby I did procure his wrath,
As fortune had assign'd.

'And seeing now the time is come
He must resign his breath,
Vouchsafe that I may speak to him,
Before the hour of death;
And reconcile myself to him,
His blessing to obtain,
That when he dies, I may not then
Beneath his curse remain.'

The monarch granted her request,
Conditionally that she
Each day unto her father went,
Should strictly searched be.
Meat nor drink she could not bring,
To help him there distress'd,
But every day she nourish'd him
With milk from her own breast.

Thus by her milk he was preserv'd
A twelvemonth and a day,
And grew both fat and fair to see,
Yet none could tell which way.
The monarch, musing much thereat,
At length did understand
How he was fed—and yet the law
Not broke on any hand.

* *Pining death*, a death by starvation.

And much admiring at the same,
And her great virtues shown,
He pardon'd him, and honour'd her
With great preferments known.
Her father ever after that
Did love her as his life:
And blest the day that she was made
A virtuous loving wife.

This ballad is framed upon the story of Anthony Molina, but it bears strong traces of having been moulded in the household laboratory. The three daughters and the old man, the two eldest married well, the youngest mated to a poor man, and therefore rejected by the father, the father falling into want, and the proud daughters refusing help, whilst the youngest, whose love he had despised, proving alone true, is the root of popular tales throughout the Aryan race. We have the Keltic tale preserved by Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the history of King Lear and his daughters; the German version is to be found in Von der Hagen, 'Gesammtabenteuer,' ii. 59 and 63; and the ancient Sanscrit tale is in the Pantschatantra, iii. 10, part of which runs as follows:—

In a certain town lived a king called Bali, who had two marriageable daughters. These came day by day at sunrise to their father and greeted him. The eldest said, 'Mayest thou be ever victorious, O great king, through whose favour all men rejoice!' but the younger only said, 'Mayest thou, O king, enjoy what is ordained to thee!' The king, exasperated at this, exclaimed, 'Hey, my minister! Give this woman, who speaks thus rudely, to wife to the first stranger at the door, that she may enjoy what is ordained to her.' She was then given to a miserable beggar who turned out to be a king's son, and who in the end was able to do him a great favour.

## 16. THE MASTER AND HIS PUPIL.

There was once a very learned man in the north-country who knew all the languages under the sun, and who was acquainted with all the mysteries of creation. He had one big book bound in black calf and clasped with iron, and with iron corners, and chained to a table which was made fast to the floor; and when he read out of this book, he unlocked it with an iron key, and none but he read from it, for it contained all the secrets of the spiritual world. It told how many angels there were in heaven, and how they marched in their ranks, and sang in their quires, and what were their several functions, and what was the name of each great angel of might. And it told of the devils of hell, how many of them there were, and what were their several powers, and their labours, and their names, and how they might be summoned, and how tasks might be imposed on them, and how they might be chained to be as slaves to man.

Now the master had a pupil who was but a foolish lad, and he acted as servant to the great master, but never was he suffered to look into the black book, hardly to enter the private room.

One day the master was out, and then the lad, impelled by curiosity, hurried to the chamber where his master kept his wondrous apparatus for changing copper into gold, and lead into silver, and where was his mirror in which he could see all that was passing in the world, and where was the shell which when held to the ear whispered all the words that were being spoken by anyone the master desired to know about. The lad tried in vain with the crucibles to turn copper and lead into gold and silver—he looked long and vainly into the mirror; smoke and clouds fleeted over it, but he saw nothing plain, and the shell to his ear produced only indistinct mutterings, like the breaking of distant seas on an unknown shore. 'I can do nothing,' he said; 'as I know not the right words to utter, and they are locked up in yon book.' He looked round, and, see! the book was unfastened; the master had forgotten to lock it before he went out. The boy rushed to it, and unclosed the volume. It was written with red and black ink, and much therein he could not understand; but he put his finger on a line, and spelled it through.

At once the room was darkened, and the house trembled; a clap of thunder rolled through the passage of the old mansion, and there stood before the terrified youth a horrible form, breathing fire, and with eyes like burning lamps. It was the Evil One, Beelzebub, whom he had called up to serve him.

'Set me a task!' said a voice, like the roaring of an iron furnace.

The boy only trembled, and his hair stood up.

'Set me a task, or I shall strangle thee!'

But the lad could not speak. Then the evil spirit stepped towards him, and putting forth his hands touched his throat. The fingers burned his flesh. 'Set me a task.'

'Water yon flower,' cried the boy in despair, pointing to a geranium which stood in a pot on the floor.

Instantly the spirit left the room, but in another instant he returned with a barrel on his back, and poured its contents over the flower; and again and again he went and came, and poured more and more water, till the floor of the room was ankle-deep.

'Enough, enough!' gasped the lad; but the Evil One heeded him not; the lad knew not the words by which to dismiss him, and still he fetched water.

It rose to the boy's knees, and still more water was poured. It mounted to his waist, and Beelzebub ceased not bringing barrels full. It rose to his armpits, and he scrambled to the table-top. And now the water stood up to the window and washed against the glass, and swirled around his feet on the table. It still rose; it reached his breast. In vain he cried; the evil spirit would not be dismissed, and to this day he would have been pouring water, and would have drowned all Yorkshire, had not the master remembered on his journey that he had not locked his book, and had therefore returned, and at the moment when the water was bubbling about the pupil's chin, spoken the words which cast Beelzebub back into his fiery home.

This a popular tale all over Europe, and has been turned into a ballad by Göthe. It is to be found in various parts of Germany, under a form much resembling that given above. It is connected in all probability with the story of the quern which ground salt in the Norse tales, and ground and ground till it sank the ship, and is grinding still at the bottom of the sea, all because those who had stolen the mill did not know how to stop it. The Norse quern is found spoken of in Snorro's Edda, but I hardly think it to belong properly to Scandinavian mythology, but rather to be an importation from that of the Finns; for the salt and meal-producing quern is a great feature in the Suomi poems, and the Kalewala relates the story of its being stolen from Pohjola by the heroes of Kalewa.

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